

and Your Lordship had spoken to me in the same sense. I felt quite confident of the loyalty of the intentions of His Majesty's Government towards the Russian Government, but that he must remember that His Majesty's Government had similar obligations of neutrality towards the Japanese Government and that he must neither expect nor ask them, while observing a friendly neutrality towards Russia, to take any action which might be construed into a breach of their neutrality towards Japan.

Count Lamsdorff at once replied that there was no expectation nor desire that His Majesty's Government should observe any other attitude than that of the strictest neutrality towards both of the belligerents during the course of the war, and he assured me that there could be no question of placing His Majesty's Government in such a predicament as I had foreshadowed.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

II.—THE SITUATION ARISING FROM THE PEACE OF PORTSMOUTH AND THE RENEWAL OF THE ANGLO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The promotion of an understanding between Russia and Great Britain was interrupted by various difficulties arising in connexion with the Russo-Japanese War (*v. supra* ch. XXIII, pp. 5–41, *passim*). Better relations began as a result of friendly messages conveyed by Sir Charles Hardinge from King Edward in May, 1905, as the following shows.]

No. 189.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1700.

(No. 950.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. May 30, 1905.

R. June 5, 1905.

I arrived in St. Petersburg yesterday morning and in the afternoon I called upon Count Lamsdorff.

On being received by His Excellency I conveyed to him, by the King's command, the friendly messages which His Majesty had entrusted to me.⁽¹⁾

I told Count Lamsdorff that The King had preserved a very pleasant remembrance of his interview with him nearly three years ago and that His Majesty had confidence in him in the knowledge that his efforts would always be directed towards the maintenance of peace and the promotion of good relations between the two countries.

Count Lamsdorff was evidently very pleased at receiving His Majesty's gracious message and, while asking me to convey to The King his most respectful thanks, assured me that it was his great aim and object to improve the relations between England and Russia, and that he trusted that His Majesty's Government would fully realise that strenuous efforts were being repeatedly made by interested parties to stir up strife between the two countries but that he hoped that the two Governments, while thoroughly appreciating the danger to be apprehended, would succeed in frustrating such a policy by carefully avoiding any incidents likely to stir up animosity or ill-feeling. For this reason he regretted all the more such an incident as that of the detention and return of Colonel Waters⁽²⁾ which, though evidently due to a complete misunderstanding, might possibly create an unfavourable impression which, if it existed, he begged me to do my utmost to mitigate and remove. He fully realised the actual difficulties of the present situation but he was full of hope and confidence that

⁽¹⁾ [These are indicated in Sir Sidney Leo: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, p. 306.]

⁽²⁾ [cp. Colonel W. H. Waters: *Secret and Confidential* (1926), pp. 279–292. This contains an account of the incident from Colonel Waters' point of view.]

at the end of this miserable war a solution would be found for all the questions at issue between the two Governments, in the same manner that a friendly arrangement had been come to between England and France. He enlarged at some length upon the advantage to Russia of the latter agreement, and stated that the news of the success of The King's recent visit to Paris had given him great satisfaction. It was only quite recently that he had expressed himself in similar terms to the Emperor, who had at the same time expressed his conviction of The King's friendly sympathy towards him.

I assured Count Lamsdorff that in this the Emperor was not mistaken, and that I was convinced that His Majesty's Government would be only too ready and willing to resume at the proper moment the negotiations for an all-round settlement of outstanding questions with Russia which had unfortunately been interrupted by the outbreak of war. I remarked that His Majesty's [sic] Government fully appreciated the attitude of the Russian Government in having avoided by their instructions to the Russian Naval Commanders any repetition of the incidents which had last year produced such a strain on the peaceful relations of the two countries, and I pointed out that this moderation had been warmly reciprocated in the efforts made by His Majesty's Government to avoid any possibility of suspicion of hostility towards the Russian Fleet in its passage to the Far East or of partiality in their obligations as a neutral towards Japan.

I seized the opportunity to bring the conversation round to Mr. Balfour's speech in the House of Commons on Imperial Defence,^(*) and I pointed out that the Prime Minister's remarks dealt entirely with the problem of defence, and that His Majesty's Government no more contemplated at the present moment the possibility of a Russian attack on India than a French invasion of Great Britain. This was made perfectly obvious by Mr. Balfour's own words when he stated that he did not believe that the invasion of India formed any part of the policy of the Russian Government, while the conduct of His Majesty's Government in Thibet, Afghanistan and Persia during the past two years gave abundant proofs of their peaceful and unaggressive intentions and of their desire to avoid any semblance of taking advantage of Russia's difficulties in the Far East.

Count Lamsdorff assured me that, in spite of the outcry which had been raised in some of the organs of the Russian press, he had never regarded the Prime Minister's speech as having any hostile tendency towards Russia, that every country had a legitimate right to take the necessary measures for its own defence, and that the measures contemplated by Mr. Balfour were evidently of a purely defensive nature relating to future rather than to actual eventualities and inferring a state of relations between the two countries which he had every confidence would be avoided.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

A very satisfactory communication.

E.R.

(*) [Speech of May 11, 1905. *Parl. Deb., 4th Ser.*, Vol. 146, pp. 62-84.]

No. 190.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1701.

(No. 387.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. June 13, 1905.

R. June 19, 1905.

The general opinion in diplomatic circles in St. Petersburg is that there has recently been a change in Russian sentiment towards Germany and that the sympathy

which existed between these two countries is not now as warm as was the case a few months ago. The impression seems to prevail that the German Emperor has been fishing in troubled waters and that having displayed excessive friendliness towards Russia while there was a hope that Russian arms might yet be victorious, and having profited by this appearance of friendliness to float a Russian loan on highly advantageous terms for German financiers, and to obtain large orders for military and naval stores of every kind, the fulfilment of which had strained to the utmost the obligations of Germany as a neutral Power, His Majesty has diverted his sympathy from Russia to Japan as the rising Power with whom it would now be more profitable to enter into closer and more friendly relations.

I have been told by the French Minister that the action of the German Emperor in raising the Morocco question immediately after the battle of Mukden, which appears to have been the psychological moment for a change in the policy of the German Emperor, had deeply wounded Russian susceptibilities by showing to the world that he considered that after her reverses in the Far East the support of Russia was a factor upon which France could no longer count as effective in Europe. The irritation caused by this feeling had been still further increased by a telegram which the German Emperor had sent to the Emperor of Russia asking His Majesty to impress upon the French Government the necessity of coming to terms with Germany in a settlement of the Morocco question. The Emperor had at once replied by a curt refusal, stating that Russian interests were small in Morocco, but that, even if they were not so, he would in no case act in opposition to France.

Although little notice at the time was taken by the Russian press of the speech made by the German Emperor a few weeks ago accusing Russian officers of dissipation, I am informed that the Emperor, who regarded it as an unwarranted attack upon the honour of his army, was deeply wounded by it.

Again, the exceptionally friendly reception given to the Japanese Prince Arisugawa and the bestowal of the Order of the Black Eagle upon His Imperial Highness, although it must be admitted that the German Emperor could hardly have done otherwise, gave nevertheless great offence to the Emperor and the Russian Court.

Finally the resignation of Monsieur Delcassé, who is regarded in Russia as the corner stone of the Franco-Russian alliance, is considered to have been due to the action of the German Emperor and to his desire to prove to France and to the world the futility of that alliance.

These incidents, combined with the restless spirit and feverish energy of the German Emperor, have impressed the Emperor with the conviction of how little the friendship of Germany is to be relied on and that, in coquetting with Japan, the German Emperor is playing for his own hand and is now offering to Japan the sympathy and encouragement which a few months ago were so freely lavished upon Russia.

It must not however be supposed that a coolness with Germany would be of any but a temporary and platonic character, for a friendly Germany is now more than ever essential to Russia's needs, and she has been, and probably will be for many years, the only Power of whom Russia is really afraid.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

The information is important.

E.R.

No. 191.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1702.

(No. 526.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. September 6, 1905.

R. September 16, 1905.

The news reached St. Petersburg last night of the signature at Portsmouth, U[nited] S[tates of] A[merica], of the Treaty of Peace between Russia and Japan after exactly nineteen months of war.⁽¹⁾

Telegrams received from the provinces during the past week have confirmed the first impressions, reported in my telegram No. 159 of the 31st ultimo,⁽²⁾ of the joy and enthusiasm which the news of the conclusion of peace has produced throughout the whole country with the exception perhaps of St. Petersburg where opinions are divided and where an influential section of public opinion, inspired by the military and reactionary parties makes no secret of its preference for the continuation of the war. The views of these latter are represented only by the "Novoe Vremya," peace being warmly acclaimed by the whole of the liberal press. It is not the conditions of peace to which exception is taken by this party in favour of war which receives strong support from the great majority of ladies in St. Petersburg society who, I may add parenthetically, have hardly any relations at all in the Russian army in Manchuria, but the opinion is openly expressed that the war should have been indefinitely prolonged until a decisive victory had been obtained, and that the conclusion of peace after such an unbroken record of disasters both on land and sea is an intolerable humiliation. All such persons believe that another great battle would have resulted in the victory which they have so long and so ardently desired, but this view is not in accord with foreign expert opinion nor with that even of many Russians.

I received a visit two days ago from a Russian officer whom I have known for some years and who has occupied a high position on the general staff in Manchuria from the very commencement of the war, and who had returned from the front only a few days previously. He spoke without reserve of the military situation in Manchuria and said that the Russian and Japanese positions were now so strongly fortified as to be almost impregnable, and that an attack by either army on the positions opposed to them would be almost certain to end in disaster and terrible losses. As a matter of fact, although the Russian army was in a position to attack, it was doubtful whether it would be able to advance even if the attack was successful. Under these circumstances if the war had been continued the two armies facing each other would have been compelled to remain in their actual positions, but the Japanese would have been free to invest Vladivostock and to occupy Khabarovsk and the maritime provinces, a situation which would have produced a bad moral impression not only in Russia but especially on General Linievitch's army. He was therefore of opinion that peace on the terms agreed upon was the wisest solution of the conflict. In reply to my enquiry as to how the news of peace would be received by the troops in Manchuria, he added that the desire for peace and for withdrawal from Manchuria was general, but only after a victory had been obtained.

All such conjectures of what might have been are at present of purely speculative interest, and now that the chapter of this terrible war can be regarded as definitely closed it may perhaps not be out of place to offer a few remarks upon the position of Anglo-Russian relations as affected by the war, and by the many incidents which have occurred during its progress.

(1) [*v. supra*, pp. 107-11, No. 101.]

(2) [Not reproduced. It stated that while the news of the peace had been received in St. Petersburg without enthusiasm, considerable satisfaction had been shown in the large provincial towns. F.O. Russia 1706.]

I need hardly remind Your Lordship of the campaign of malicious lies and misrepresentation which was initiated against Great Britain simultaneously with the outbreak of war and which lasted during the first year of its progress, commencing with the reported utilisation of Wei-hei-wei as the base from which the Japanese fleet made their attack on the Russian fleet at Port Arthur on the 8th of February and culminating with the accusations levelled against the Hull fishermen of complicity in an attack by imaginary torpedo-boats on the Baltic fleet, nor is it necessary for me to recapitulate all the serious incidents which have occurred during the past eighteen months and which on more than one occasion have strained the relations existing between the two countries almost to breaking point. During all this period the position of His Majesty's Embassy has been one of difficulty while that of British subjects residing in Russia has not been without personal risk, owing to the bitter hostility and incitement of the Chauvinistic press against England and all that was English. The firm attitude of His Majesty's Government in openly refuting the baseless charges made against their policy and officials, the determined remonstrances addressed to the Russian Government against the illegal actions of their naval officers, and finally the temperate proposal of arbitration after an unprecedented outburst of warlike indignation owing to the unfortunate incident on the Dogger Bank, which was eventually proved to have been an unwarrantable attack on harmless British fishing-vessels, thus avoiding what would have been a useless and unprofitable war, all these causes have tended to impress the Russian Government and Russian public opinion with a more favourable idea of the dignity and impartiality with which His Majesty's Government faithfully discharged their obligations of neutrality not only towards Russia but also towards their Japanese allies. The loyalty of His Majesty's Government to that of France during the recent Morocco incident has also afforded a useful object lesson which has had due effect, and I have no hesitation in asserting my opinion that during the past six months there has been a decided improvement in public sentiment towards England, that the bitter hostility which was daily displayed in the Russian press has almost entirely disappeared, and that the relations between the two countries are now on a more friendly footing than has been the case since the outbreak of war.

It is always possible that an incident, for example on the Afghan frontier, might provoke a recrudescence of animosity, but it must be remembered that the military and Chauvinistic party in Russia has fortunately sustained during the past war a shock from which it is probable that it will never recover, and that the liberal and constitutional party, the party of the future, is less likely to embark on a policy of adventure, there being every probability that its attention and that of the country will for a long time be entirely engrossed with questions of constitutional development.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

No. 192.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1702.

(No. 573.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. September 26, 1905.

R. September 30, 1905.

I called this afternoon upon Mr. Hartwig, Director of the first Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and he informed me confidentially that in accordance with the agreement with His Majesty's Government Monsieur Klemm had been appointed Consul General at Meshed and that he would leave Bombay during the

month of November, a few weeks having been allowed him to settle his private affairs in India. His successor had not yet been designated.

While thanking Mr. Hartwig for this communication I expressed my satisfaction that we had thus succeeded in settling a question which had been pending for the last six years and I impressed upon him the necessity of paying special attention to the selection of a successor to Mr. Klemm who should be of a conciliatory character and a thorough gentleman, so that an end might once for all be put to the era of suspicion and distrust which had surrounded the Russian Consulate at Bombay from the very moment of its establishment.

Mr. Hartwig replied that he was fully alive to the importance of a good selection. He added that the settlement of this long pending question gave him great satisfaction as being of happy augury for the removal in the near future of other sources of suspicion and distrust between our two countries. The loyal cooperation of His Majesty's Government in Macedonia and Crete, especially in the latter island, proved conclusively that there need be no cause for conflict between Great Britain and Russia in the Near East and that Russia would be left a free hand for the impending struggle with Germany on the shores of the Bosphorus. The questions pending in Asia could with a little moderation on both sides be easily settled, and although Count Benckendorff repeatedly wrote that the idea of a Russian invasion of India was deeply ingrained in the minds of Englishmen he could assure me that such ambitions were only to be found in the most shallow brains of the military classes and that there was at this moment in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs a document prepared by General Kuropatkin in 1899 in which it was stated that the actual frontier of Russia and Afghanistan was ideal and should under no circumstances be modified. As for Persia where Russia had important interests, there should be no difficulty in arriving at a satisfactory settlement and the Persian should be prevented at all costs from playing off England against Russia and *vice versa*.

I remarked to Mr. Hartwig that I entirely shared his views as to the feasibility of settling satisfactorily all questions that might be pending in Asia between the two Governments but I fully realised the importance which the Russian Government attached to the maintenance of good relations with her western neighbour and I had some doubts as to whether an Anglo-Russian agreement would not provoke a serious outburst of ill-humour at Berlin which might prejudice the good relations so happily existing between Germany and Russia.

To this Mr. Hartwig replied with some warmth that although the Russian Government naturally attached importance to the maintenance of friendly relations with their neighbours the policy of the German Emperor was appreciated at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs at its proper value and was dictated solely by self interest. The latest attempt had been to insinuate every sort of danger to be apprehended from the new Anglo-Japanese Treaty and that it constituted a menace to German interests in China.⁽¹⁾ Nevertheless it was not for the German Government to interfere in questions pending between the British and Russian Governments in Asia in which they could have no interest nor concern. He alluded bitterly to the duplicity of the German Government in having declared at the time of the South African War that they were in possession of a document from the Russian Government proposing intervention while in reality it was a document which he himself had drafted and which Count Osten-Sacken had delivered stating that Russia had no interests in South Africa and that if the German Government were of opinion that intervention was necessary at that stage of the war they themselves should take the first step.

Mr. Hartwig continued that in any case, and even before a general settlement could be made, there were many points of friction between the Agents of the two Governments which with a little good will on each side might be removed.

For instance in the reports received from Mr. Kolokoloff Russian Consul General at Kashgar, there were continual complaints of the unfriendly activity of

(1) [cp. *infra*, p. 204, No. 193, *encl.*]

Mr. Macartney the British Consul, and it was evident that the Chinese with their customary skill were playing off one official against the other. The evil results of this state of affairs were that fantastic reports were spread on each side of military activity, and the military officers with the Russian outposts in the Pamirs were in a perpetual fever of excitement. He had already on more than one occasion written to Mr. Kolokoloff and urged him to maintain friendly relations with his British Colleague and not to allow himself to be the dupe of Chinese intrigues.

I expressed my approval of the advice given to the Russian Consul General but I thought that the reported activity of Mr. Macartney must be exaggerated as he had occupied his present position for several years and I believed that he had always been on friendly terms with Mr. Petrowsky, the predecessor of the present Consul General.

Mr. Hartwig further drew my attention to an unfriendly article which had appeared in the "Novoe Vremya" a few days ago relating to the recent British frontier award in Seistan and stated that certain circles, including some officials of the Ministry of War, were much perturbed at the reports which had been spread that it was now within the power of the British Government to reduce the province of Seistan to an arid desert. The Russian Consul in Seistan who was now on leave, had called on him yesterday and in reply to his enquiry about the frontier award had stated that the delimitation could not have been carried out with greater justice but that the Persians complained that the award regulating the distribution of the waters of the Helmund was not fair since the fertility of the province of Seistan depended on the caprice of one British Engineer whose decision was to be final. Such an arrangement would be sure to cause endless trouble. Another drawback was to be found in the fact that the map showing the delimitation of the Perso-Afghan frontier had only been executed in duplicate, of which one copy had been carried off by Colonel MacMahon and the other had been confided to the Karguzar of Seistan under a promise to keep it secret. He did not understand the motives for such mystery but if the map had been published the Russian Government would have been happy to deny the unfairness of the delimitation and to tell the Persians that they would have to adhere to it.

I told Mr. Hartwig that Colonel MacMahon had anticipated that his frontier award would be accepted with more difficulty by the Afghans than by the Persians and that if the latter now complain of their treatment it is an additional testimony of the fairness of the award. As regards the objections raised to the water award I asked Mr. Hartwig what remedy he would propose.

He at once replied that it was a matter which should be entrusted to a joint commission to regulate, and that it should not be dependent on a single individual who would be exposed to influences of different kinds.

I did not pursue this question further but I strongly suspect that Mr. Hartwig's idea was that the Russian Consul should be a member of the joint commission which he recommended.

My interview ended with a renewed assurance from Mr. Hartwig of his desire to remove all petty cases of friction by friendly co-operation with a view to preparing for an arrangement on broader lines between the two Governments.

I have thought it worth while to report at some length Mr. Hartwig's conversation with me as he plays a considerable rôle at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in all Asiatic questions, is the right hand of Count Lamsdorff and enjoys his complete confidence, but not entirely mine.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

P.S.—Since writing the above I have read Sir Arthur Hardinge's despatches which have reached me under flying seal from which it is evident that the refusal of the Persian Government to accept Colonel MacMahon's water award was due to the intrigues of the Russian Legation of which Mr. Hartwig must have been perfectly

aware in our interview, and it is probable that the Shah received encouragement in this course during His Majesty's visit to St. Petersburg when I forwarded by Sir A. Hardinge's request a sealed letter addressed by him to the Ain-ed-Dowleh, of which I did not know the contents, but which I now see contained an appeal to His Highness to accept the award and which may not improbably have been a subject of discussion at Peterhof.

C. H.

September 27, 1905.

No. 198.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Russia 1708.

(No. 586.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. October 1, 1905.

My Lord,

R. October 9, 1905.

Two events of interest have occurred during the past week, viz., the return of Monsieur Witte from his mission and the publication of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty.⁽²⁾

M. Witte arrived in St. Petersburg on the 28th ultimo and had no formal reception, a few officials and friends being at the station to meet him. On the following day he was summoned by the Emperor to Biorki [*sic*] where he was received by His Majesty on the Imperial yacht "Polar Star" and had the honour of the title of Count being conferred upon him. Much speculation is rife as to the result of M. Witte's audience with the Emperor William⁽³⁾ and many conjectures are hazarded as to the object of the special honour which has been conferred upon him by the presentation of the Collar of the Red Eagle, which was officially announced in the Russian press as being the Collar of the *Black* Eagle and was regarded as a very remarkable demonstration of Imperial favour. It is however possible that this distinction has no more significance than the high military order bestowed on General Stoessel on the surrender of Port Arthur, and the desire of the Emperor to enlist the sympathies of a Russian official who is still likely to play a considerable rôle in the future. It is quite certain that whatever may have been the subjects of discussion in Berlin and at Rominten [*sic*], M. Witte had received no special instructions from the Emperor, and at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs it has since been denied that any arrangement was arrived at. I hear however from a private source that Count Witte has returned intensely gratified with the reception accorded to him by the Emperor William which he describes as the same as that accorded to a sovereign, and with which his reception at Cherbourg compares very unfavourably. He takes credit to himself for the solution of the difference between Germany and France relating to Morocco, and advocates the establishment of close relations between these two countries. Flattered in his vanity by the exceptional honours paid to him by the Emperor William and Prince Bülow, Count Witte, who was previously an open opponent of German influence in Russian policy, has returned to St. Petersburg an enthusiastic admirer of the German Emperor and a warm adherent of a policy of *rapprochement* with Germany.

The publication of the text of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement may, not improbably, have contributed to, or at least facilitated, Count Witte's conversion.

It has not however been received, on the whole, in an unfriendly manner by the

⁽¹⁾ [M. Witte's published statement on August 29, 1905, is given in Tyler Dennett's *Roosevelt*, (1925), p. 261. Apparently M. Witte did not yet know of the Treaty of Björko (v. p. 95, No. 91. *note*). An account of the reception of the Treaty by the Japanese public is given in Sir C. MacDonald, No. 246 of September 26, R. October 30, 1905. This is not reproduced as most of the details were published in the press at the time.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 174, *Ed. note*, and p. 182, Nos. 179-80.]

⁽³⁾ [This was on September 26 and 27 at Rominten. v. G.P. XIX, II, pp. 505-15 and Count Witte: *Mémoires* (1921), pp. 374-80. He states p. 381 that he spoke of the Treaty of Björko with the Emperor William II but only saw the text on reaching St. Petersburg. The Emperor's account, G.P. XIX, II, p. 510, is somewhat different.]

Russian press, the criticisms expressed being in the main reasonable. The effect of its publication had been to a certain extent discounted by the earlier announcements made in the press as to its general tenour, from which it was evident that the reactionary organs were annoyed at the conclusion of the agreement, some of them, such as the "Novoe Vremja," advocating a counter-combination with Germany or America, while the references made in the liberal press have been of a generally friendly character.

The "Russ" which receives inspiration from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and may now be regarded as the organ of that department, holds that the real significance of the agreement depends on the interpretation to be attached to such terms as "Eastern Asia" and "special interests" mentioned in Articles II and IV, and the necessity is indicated of a comprehensive statement of the extent and nature of English aims in Asia. If the policy of England is actuated by peaceful motives and the maintenance of British rights and interests already existing, then no difficulty need be experienced in arriving at an agreement between England and Russia.

Other liberal organs express the hope that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance will prove the futility of further adventures in the Far East and that Russia will henceforward devote her attentions to internal reform and the more pressing problems awaiting solution in Europe and the Near East.

Although the manifestations of ill-humour of the German press have been re-echoed in the "Novoe Vremja" and other reactionary journals, it is fully realised that a Russo-German understanding in Asia as a counterpoise to the Japanese Alliance might jeopardise Russian aspirations in the Near East and would most certainly weaken the Franco-Russian Alliance in Europe.

I have the honour to enclose herewith a summary by Captain Smith of the comments of the principal journals on the Anglo-Japanese Agreement.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

Enclosure in No. 193.

Press Comments on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

The "Novoe Vremya" after pointing out discrepancies between the two Treaties, maintains that the Alliance is directed against Russia, and that such preponderance of power as it gives to England and Japan in Asia does not make for peace. But, whilst advising a counter political Combination, which will only make peace surer and more lasting if peace be England's real aim, it considers immediate action in this direction would be inadvisable, and would encounter enormous difficulties, although the present time is undoubtedly favourable to preparatory work of this kind. Future Russian Policy must be guided entirely by precise knowledge as to the real aims of the Alliance, and of the "special interests" referred to in Article IV. The evidences apparent of England's willingness to enlighten Russia on this latter point should be taken advantage of.

The "Russ" temperately and in a conciliatory manner, points out that if England, by reason of her Alliance, initiates an aggressive policy in Asia, attempting to draw under her special influence territories formerly outside this sphere, and strives to consolidate her authority over all Southern Asia, from the China Sea to the Persian Gulf inclusive, then it will necessitate fresh military and perhaps even new political Combinations. Again, Russia having no intention of invading India, views with indifference any measures taken by England within the boundaries of her Indian Empire but the same cannot be said of "regions in proximity to the Indian Frontier." For this reason it is highly advisable to remove all ambiguity with reference to Articles II and IV and such terms as "Eastern Asia," & "special interests." It reiterates its oft-expressed opinion that there need be no conflict between Russian and English interests in Asia, and thinks that if England is honestly actuated by peaceful

motives and is striving solely to safeguard only those interests at present existing and which are hers by right, then there is no reason why an understanding should not be arrived at, with a possible agreement based on this ground. But at the present more than any other time the first step in this direction must be made by England and not by Russia. In connection with this it is a fact worthy of note that whilst Continental papers are discussing the advisability and possibility of counter-coalitions, the more serious English papers speak of an Anglo-Russian Agreement. However first and foremost a plain and comprehensive statement of the extent and nature of English claims in Asia is absolutely necessary.

The "Novosti" speaks in warmest terms of the letter dated 6 Sep[tember], 1905, and considers that read in conjunction with the Treaty and the comments of the leading English journals on the subject of an Anglo-Russian Agreement it proves the sincerity of England's desire for peace. Warning Russian Politicians of the dangers besetting them at present, it urges wariness lest they commit an irreparable mistake. Whilst fully recognising Germany's good offices and hoping for a long continuance of the existing relations between Germany and Russia, it quotes facts to prove that it is not to the latter's advantage to share Germany's quarrels with England, and frankly states that there is more danger to be apprehended by joining an Anti-British Coalition than from an Anglo-Russian Agreement, for which it has always been a strong advocate.

The "Slovo" characteristically, regrets the lost opportunities of an Alliance with Japan and stigmatises the signature of a Treaty by a Christian England, a great white European Power, with a heathen Japan, a yellow Asiatic Power, as the consummation of an unnatural crime against Russia, Europe, and the whole civilised World. Considers the Alliance as an impudent attempt to place the whole Asiatic continent under a Doctrine similar to the Monroe Doctrine, established by another branch of the Anglo-Saxon race in the New World. An attempt best answered by a Coalition of France, Germany, and Russia.

The local German newspapers state that the Alliance affects Russian interests throughout the whole of Asia, and consider that as an outcome of this Treaty there may be a delimitation of English and Russian spheres of Influence in Asia. At present Russia is, and for many years to come will remain helpless, except by combining with other European Powers in an Anti-British Coalition.

St. Petersburg, 1905, (8 October).

No. 194.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.

F.O. Russia 1697.

(No. 296.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 3, 1905.

The Russian Ambassador called upon me today on his return to London, and we had a very amicable conversation upon various subjects.

His Excellency asked me how I thought we stood with regard to the possibility of arriving at an understanding between the two Powers. He said that our new Treaty with Japan had undoubtedly come rather as a shock to the Russian public. On the other hand, the feeling of the Government was not unfriendly, and he mentioned in particular Count Lamsdorff's readiness to discuss the question of such an understanding. His Excellency doubted however whether it would be prudent to say too much upon the subject at this moment. He was himself about to leave almost immediately for Copenhagen, after which he would pay a short visit to Russia. He would then have an opportunity of consulting with Count Lamsdorff, and would be in

a better position to explain the ideas of the Russian Government when he came back.

His Excellency referred with much satisfaction to the tone of the English newspapers, and particularly to the article which appeared in the "Times" of yesterday—an article which, as I reminded him, was founded upon information supplied to the "Times" by its St. Petersburg Correspondent, and apparently derived from official sources. I said that I had not yet had any opportunity of discussing this important question with the Prime Minister. I felt sure, however, that he would be as ready as I was to approach in the most friendly spirit such a negotiation as that at which His Excellency had hinted. My own feeling was that it would be a mistake to attempt too much, or to allow it to be understood that the two countries were on the eve of a comprehensive transaction analogous to that which had taken place between France and Great Britain. My idea of the procedure to be followed was rather that we should take up in detail any outstanding points as to which differences of opinion had manifested themselves and endeavour to dispose of these, and that we should then pass on to others, if we found that our work proceeded successfully.

I had in my mind, although I did not refer to it, the question of the relations between Russian and Afghan officials, which His Excellency and I had on more than one occasion discussed before the war broke out.

I ended by saying that, in the meanwhile, I thought it satisfactory that we should be working together harmoniously in Crete, and also in regard to the Macedonian question.

Count Benckendorff expressed agreement with what I had said, and said that he would repeat the substance of our conversation to Count Lamsdorff.

I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.

No. 195.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1703.

(No. 594.) Very Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. October 4, 1905.

R. October 9, 1905.

The French Ambassador called upon me this afternoon and told me that he had had an interview with Count Witte whom he found filled with an exaggerated idea of the rôle which he had lately played in international politics at Portsmouth, completely under the impression of his recent reception in Germany,⁽¹⁾ and in a state of rabid irritation over the Anglo-Japanese alliance. He told Monsieur Bompard that it was absolutely necessary that the Powers should make a reply to the Anglo-Japanese agreement, that it should be met by a Franco-Russian and German coalition, and that he had urged this at Berlin, where he found Germany a strong partisan of the Dual Alliance. Monsieur Bompard replied that, although it might suit Germany for the time being to be a partisan of the Dual Alliance, in this case it was not likely that the coalition he suggested would be realised, since no advantage would be gained from it by France who enjoyed friendly relations with England, against whom the coalition was apparently (to be ?) directed.⁽²⁾

Monsieur Bompard told me that the French Government were anxious as to the situation here and as to the possibility of a *rapprochement* between Russia and Germany, that Count Lamsdorff was very reserved whenever he alluded to the Anglo-Japanese agreement, and that Count Witte must now be regarded as absolutely

(¹) [*cp. supra*, pp. 202-3, No. 193.]

(²) [*ib.* and p. 204, *encl.*]

German in his sympathies and as a dangerous element for the future. Owing to the anxiety of the French Government he had been obliged to defer taking leave, and as he gathered that his Government anticipated that His Majesty's Government would make some move towards the establishment of more friendly relations with the Russian Government in which they would be able to co-operate, he asked me if I was aware of any such project being in view.

I replied that although I knew that Your Lordship had a sincere desire for friendly relations with Russia and for the settlement of all questions pending between the two countries, I had received no instructions to formally raise the question, and in my own opinion to do so at the present moment would be premature and might tend to frustrate the object in view. As regards the possibility of a *rapprochement* between Russia and Germany, it was difficult to see what advantage Russia would gain in the Far East where Germany is powerless, while Russian interests and aspirations would necessarily suffer from such an alliance in the Near East. So long as France maintained her present attitude any coalition proposed by Germany would be almost certain to end in failure.

Monsieur Bompard asked me whether a coalition between Russia, Germany and the United States was possible, to which I replied that it appeared to me in the highest degree improbable in view of President Roosevelt's relations with both England and Japan and of his attitude towards the question of the "open door" which both Powers were pledged to maintain.

Later in the afternoon I saw Count Lamsdorff at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and, the conversation having turned to the Russian press, I remarked that I was on the whole very satisfied with the attitude assumed by the Russian press towards the Anglo-Japanese agreement, and that the criticisms made had been reasonable and not generally unfriendly. As however the press in Russia cannot be regarded as an indication of the attitude of the Government, I begged him to tell me quite frankly, and unofficially if he wished, the real opinion of the Government on the subject of the Anglo-Japanese agreement.

Count Lamsdorff expressed the desire that our conversation should be regarded as unofficial and of a private character and proceeded to inform me that the Agreement had created a most unfavourable impression in Government circles, that the fact of its being aimed at Russia could not possibly be denied, and that the Russian Government resented the introduction of a third Power like Japan in questions which did not concern her, but which affected England and Russia in Central Asia. Had there been no such treaty the moment of the conclusion of peace would have been a most favourable opportunity for the settlement of all questions pending between England and Russia which he himself had always ardently desired, but that the hostile criticism provoked by the new treaty precluded such a possibility at present.

I replied to Count Lamsdorff that I must remind him of the friendly assurances that I had already given him on Your Lordship's behalf, but that even if the agreement was aimed at Russia which I would not admit as conclusive, its defensive character could not possibly be denied. As he had spoken to me frankly I would do the same to him in discussing that part of the agreement to which he had referred and to which he seemed to take special exception. While insisting on the fact that the agreement was a form of national insurance against a condition of affairs which I trusted would never arise, I called his attention to what had been going on in Central Asia during the past ten years. There, a system of railways of purely strategic importance had been built by the Russian Government at the cost of great sacrifices and had been brought down to the frontier of Afghanistan, which the Russian Government had repeatedly declared to be outside their sphere of influence, and to the very gates of Herat. If it were asked against whom these preparations were directed the only possible reply was that they were intended to facilitate an attack on Afghanistan or India. I had never believed that any person connected with the Russian Government seriously contemplated the invasion of India, but there was no doubt that it was intended that there should be a perpetual means of exerting pressure upon England by military movements

on the Afghan frontier in the event of any cause for disagreement or any incident arising, whether in the Near East, the North Sea or elsewhere. Such a situation would resemble that of Turkey and the Great Powers with their naval demonstrations, and would constitute a standing menace to India. As England had no pretension to be a military Power with forces on a continental scale, she was fully justified in taking steps to assure her frontiers from attack and to ensure the *status quo* in Asia, while herself harbouring no aggressive intentions.

Count Lamsdorff did not refute my statement but argued that when an agreement had been arrived at between the two countries no reasons for discord or menace would exist, and that it was hardly fair to state that the Russian railways in Central Asia were for purely strategic purposes.

I did not pursue this point further but I asked Count Lamsdorff whether, in his private opinion, he considered the question of the resumption of negotiations with a view to the settlement of outstanding differences as inopportune for the time being or as indefinitely deferred, and I remarked that, although there might be disadvantage in being too precipitate, I could see no reason for the latter view.

Count Lamsdorff replied that, in spite of all present impressions and speculative eventualities, he was still sincerely desirous of placing the relations between England and Russia on a firm and friendly basis, but that he considered that it would be a mistake to attempt at the present moment the resumption of the previous negotiations. He thought however that both Governments should endeavour to settle between them in a friendly manner such questions as could be dealt with singly so as to convince public opinion of the advantages to be obtained from friendly relations and thus to prepare the way for the settlement of all outstanding differences. He warned me at the same time that systematic and untiring efforts were being made here to render impossible the attainment of the object which we had in view.

I thanked Count Lamsdorff for his frankness and he begged once more that what he had said might be regarded as unofficial.

It appears to me that Count Lamsdorff has to a certain extent fallen under the influence of Count Witte who makes no effort to conceal his anger at the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese agreement, and that he is now more outspoken in his objections than when he last spoke to me a fortnight ago. The annoyance which is felt is, I believe, due to the knowledge that the weapon of offence, which has been forged with so much care and outlay for use in Central Asia, has lost its edge, thus bearing the highest testimony to the value of the extended form of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. (*)

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

A most interesting dispatch!

E.R.

(*) [Language approved by Lord Lansdowne in No. 305 of October 11 to Sir C. Hardinge.]

No. 196.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.

F.O. Russia 1697.

(No. 300.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 5, 1905.

During the course of a long conversation with the Russian Ambassador this afternoon I recurred to the possibility of an amicable arrangement between Great Britain and Russia of the kind which we had discussed on the 3rd instant (see my

despatch No. 296 of that date).⁽¹⁾ I told His Excellency that I was about to leave for Balmoral where I should see the King and the Prime Minister, and that I was extremely anxious to be exactly aware of His Excellency's views. He repeated to me that he believed the Russian Government and an influential section of the Russian public to be strongly in favour of such an understanding. His own view however was that the matter should not be too much pressed at the present moment. Although our Treaty with Japan had not been badly taken, it had undoubtedly come as a shock to public opinion in Russia, and in His Excellency's opinion it would be better to give time for the effect to pass off. He would visit St. Petersburg in November, and would take an opportunity of more fully ascertaining Count Lamsdorff's views. It would then be possible for us to resume our conversation.

His Excellency volunteered the statement that, in his view, the Persian question was the only one presenting serious difficulties. He did not however see why we should not be able to come to terms with regard to it. Russia did not want to annex Persian territory or to acquire a port on the Persian Gulf, although she might want a *débouché* for her trade in those waters. I said that neither had we any desire to encroach upon the integrity of Persia, and that our policy as to foreign commerce was well known. I should be quite ready to discuss the Persian question with His Excellency whenever he was ready to do so.

His Excellency added that he had only one more observation to make, viz. that any arrangement of the kind should not be conceived in a spirit of hostility towards Germany. I said that nothing was further from my thoughts; I failed altogether to see why such an understanding as we both desired should contain any element of hostility either towards Germany or towards any other Power. I thought it most unfortunate that some people's minds should be so constituted as to make them see, in every neighbourly arrangement arrived at between two or more Powers, a coalition aimed at another.

His Excellency ended by expressing a hope that I would authorise you to take a suitable opportunity, perhaps while His Excellency was in St. Petersburg, to speak to Count Lamsdorff somewhat in the sense of the remarks which I had made.

I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 204-5, No. 194.]

No. 197.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1708.

(No. 604.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. October 8, 1905.

R. October 14, 1905.

During the past few days articles have appeared in the "Novoe Vremja," a journal notorious for its Anglophobia, in which it is pointed out that no counter-combination to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance is in the present disposition of the Powers possible, and that, the aim of the new Treaty of alliance being to maintain peace and to prevent aggressive designs in Eastern and Central Asia, Russia and other interested Powers should agree to the maintenance of the *status quo*, provided that guarantees in the same sense were given by England and Japan.⁽¹⁾

These articles have been the subject of favourable comment in the English press, and have certainly been the means of affecting a *détente* in the relations of the press of the two countries, but I have not considered it necessary to send translations

⁽¹⁾ [cp. *supra*, pp. 202-4, No. 193 and *encl.*]

to Your Lordship since the views of the Russian press do not necessarily represent the views of the Russian Government, and I do not wish to attach undue importance to newspaper articles which the French Ambassador told me in confidence had been directly inspired by the French Embassy. They may however be regarded as pleasing indications of our friendly relations with France and of the desire of the French Government for an amicable understanding between England and Russia.

The action of the French Embassy must not be regarded as entirely disinterested, since it is inspired by anxiety on the part of the French Government lest the sequel to the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement should be a *rapprochement* of Germany and Russia. Monsieur Bompard has twice within the last week suggested to me that His Majesty's Government should make some advance to the Russian Government in order to show their conciliatory disposition, and should propose that Russia and the other Powers interested in China should be invited to adhere to a declaration of their intention to maintain the independence and integrity of China and the principle of the "open door" as defined in the preamble of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty,⁽²⁾ this being the only common ground of agreement between England, Russia and the other Powers. He had already made this suggestion to his Government, and Your Lordship may consequently have cognisance of it. The object of this step, as M. Bompard explained to me, would be to forestall any action on the part of Germany and to frustrate any overtures for a Russo-German combination in the Far East which the Russian Government might be disposed to accept as a salve to their wounded *amour-propre* if His Majesty's Government held aloof. He fully realised that the moment was not yet ripe for the resumption of the previous negotiations which had been interrupted by the war.

Although it is impossible to know whether any negotiations are in progress between Russia and Germany relating to the Far East or elsewhere, it is difficult to imagine that even Count Witte with his present Germanophil tendencies would advocate co-operation with Germany in the Far East, in a sense contrary to the spirit of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement, after the disastrous experiences of the Russian Government in the Manchurian adventure, which was inspired and precipitated by the German adventure at Kiao-Chao. In the near East, German and Russian interests are in direct conflict, and with the lapse of time this divergence is likely to become more acute, but it is essential for Russia, especially at the present moment of internal disturbance, to maintain friendly relations with her western neighbour. I have pointed out these considerations to M. Bompard who appears very nervous as to the possible action of Germany, but whether his anxiety is well founded or not time alone can shew.

It appears to me however to be doubtful whether the French Ambassador's suggestion, if carried out, would be of any practical utility or advantage to His Majesty's Government unless the proposed declaration were of wider scope embracing the maintenance of the *status quo* in Asia, and unless it were made by England and Japan conjointly, since a separate and isolated communication by England would tend to impair the solidarity which should exist between the two Allies. The Russian Government, in their adherence to the Anglo-German agreement of 1900, affirmed that the integrity of the Chinese Empire constituted the fundamental principle of their policy in China, and in reply to Mr. Hay's Circular of 1901 they announced their acceptance of the principle of the "open door." A reaffirmation of these principles would hardly be worth more than the previous declarations.

I would also point out that if an international declaration asserting the principles of the maintenance of the independence and integrity of China and of the "open door" were made by the Powers especially interested in the Far East, the Anglo-Japanese agreement might become depreciated in the eyes of the Japanese, since it would no doubt be argued that some of its most important provisions, affecting chiefly Japan, had been guaranteed by the Powers, while the obligations of Japan towards

(2) [*v. supra*, p. 165, No. 155.]

England in Central Asia remained binding without any corresponding guarantee. This might possibly have the effect of making the Treaty appear to the Japanese one-sided and burdensome, although in reality there is a wide difference between a platonic declaration and an agreement which two Powers bind themselves to maintain by force of arms.

An alternative course which would not present the same objections as that suggested by the French Ambassador would be a joint communication by England and Japan to all the Powers interested in the Far East stating in approximately the same words as in the preamble of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement that the object of the Treaty is the maintenance and consolidation of the general peace throughout Asia, the preservation of the common interests of all the Powers, the independence and integrity of existing Asiatic Governments and the principles of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations.

Such a communication made jointly by the two Allies would strengthen and not weaken the force and authority of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement. It would have an eminently pacificatory effect on the world at large, and in view of the frequent assurances made by the Russian Government with regard both to Afghanistan and Persia could hardly fail to elicit a satisfactory reply from Russia on the general principle.

Finally, if it should be considered desirable by His Majesty's Government to make a friendly advance towards Russia in this or in any other sense, it would be as well to combine it with the negotiations, which, I learn from a private source, are in progress for the issue of part of a Russian loan in London, since the natural desire of the Russian Government to place their paper on the English market will help to facilitate such an understanding as would have a reassuring effect on the British financial public.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

MINUTES.

The communication which Sir C. Hardinge suggests might be made jointly by Great Britain and Japan would, as far as Russia is concerned, be almost a repetition of the communication already made at St. Petersburg by Sir C. Hardinge.

But this was less formal than what Sir C. Hardinge advocates.

W. L.

F. A. C.

14.10.

* I agree with Sir Charles Hardinge that there would be no advantage in volunteering an announcement which would in effect merely be an iteration of the Preamble of the Treaty. A joint communication on the part of Great Britain and Japan inviting a general acceptance of the status quo in Asia might be worth considering, but we shall have to be extremely careful how we make such a proposal to the Japanese Government, who would probably regard it with no little suspicion. They would certainly ask what was meant by "the maintenance of the status quo in Asia," or by "the preservation of the independence and integrity of existing Asiatic Governments."

For the moment however the Russian Government do not seem to be ready to receive any such overtures, and it will be better to take no further action at present.

The financial negotiations to which Sir Charles Hardinge refers in the last paragraph of his despatch must, I think, be allowed to take their course independently of any negotiations having reference to political affairs.

L.

Oct. 17, 1905.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1708.

(No. 616.) Very Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. October 14, 1905.

My Lord,

R. October 18, 1905.

The French Ambassador left for Paris to-day. Before leaving he had a conversation with Count Lamsdorff on the subject of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement and he has kindly given me the following account of what passed between them.

Count Lamsdorff showed great reluctance to discuss the question and it was only on Monsieur Bompard insisting that it was a matter of interest to France as the Ally of Russia to know his views that he consented to disclose them. He spoke at first in somewhat strong terms of the Anglo-Japanese agreement which, he said, had in spite of the pacificatory explanation which accompanied it shocked Russia by the directness of its intention. Previous to the outbreak of war England had been in negotiation with Russia on many pending questions in Asia and these discussions had been necessarily interrupted on the commencement of hostilities. Before even the war had been concluded England, regardless of her previous negotiations, had changed the whole situation and had endeavoured to impose her will and that of Japan upon the remaining Powers in Asia. This proceeding had caused deep dissatisfaction not merely in Russia but also in Germany and the United States.⁽¹⁾ England had repeated in Asia the same policy which she had followed in Africa and had caused such a shock to the whole world that it became necessary to put an end to such proceedings once and for all. The way to do so would be to form a coalition of Powers, which need not have an aggressive character, as a counterpoise to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, in the same manner that the political equilibrium of Europe was maintained by the Dual and Triple Alliances, and a combination of Russia, France, Germany, and the United States would serve that purpose.

Monsieur Bompard replied that if Russia had really a grievance as to the manner in which England and Japan by their agreement sought to impose their will in Asia, France might equally claim to be aggrieved, but that there could be no possible question of France entering into any coalition with Russia and Germany after the treatment recently experienced by France at the hands of the latter Power. He reminded Count Lamsdorff that the action of Germany in Morocco, of which the object had been to detach France from England, had only served to draw them closer together, and that any counter-combination would necessarily tend to consolidate the Anglo-Japanese alliance. The only course for other Powers to follow was to assimilate their action to that of England and Japan and to publicly adopt the principles enunciated in the preamble of the agreement affirming its object to be the maintenance of the independence and integrity of China and of the principle of the "open door." This would harmonise with the announcement made by Russia and France in 1902 in reply to the first Anglo-Japanese Treaty. As regards Central Asia the matter was one which concerned only England and Russia. It was evident that the policy of England had been to guarantee her position in that part of Asia, but that there was no indication of any aggressive intention on her part and consequently no reason why an agreement should not be arrived at between the two Powers.

Count Lamsdorff stated in reply that there could at present be no question of resuming the previous negotiations, since a new and entirely different situation had been introduced by the intrusion of a third Power, but he frankly admitted that the Anglo-Japanese agreement had apparently no aggressive intent, and that therefore there was no immediate danger to be foreseen and no pressing necessity for any action being taken. At the present moment all that was known of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was the text, but the important part to know was the spirit in

⁽¹⁾ [Marginal comment by Lord Lansdowne: "This is quite unsupported by evidence."]

which it would be carried out. Time could only show this and what, if any, action was necessary by the other Powers to counteract its effects. He admitted that the German Emperor was making strenuous efforts to induce the Russian Government to take some definite step in connection with the agreement.

Monsieur Bompard told me that the impression left upon his mind was that Count Lamsdorff regarded him in this matter as the advocate of England, and that in the earlier part of his conversation he had been to a certain extent "bluffing," but that Germany was making a serious endeavour to inveigle Russia into some sort of agreement or undertaking to which Count Lamsdorff was personally unfavourably disposed. Count Lamsdorff would, he considers, in view of the ideal of a Russo-German-French-American coalition being unrealisable, prefer to remain with his hands free and to await further developments, since any sort of agreement with Germany might prove prejudicial to the French alliance and might place Russia in a false position. The question however was whether Count Lamsdorff would be strong enough to resist the pressure which might be placed upon him by the two Emperors.

Monsieur Bompard laid stress on what Count Lamsdorff had said to him respecting the dissatisfaction of the United States Government with the Anglo-Japanese agreement, more especially as it was the second time that Count Lamsdorff referred to it in conversation with him. The danger of such an attitude on the part of the United States Government would consist in the fact that Russia might be disposed to enter into a coalition with Germany and the United States while she would be unwilling to enter into an agreement with Germany alone.

I replied that as far as I knew there had been no indication of any ill-will on the part of the United States, and that it seemed to me very improbable in view of the repeated declarations of the American Government of their desire for the independence and integrity of China and for equal opportunity for the trade of all nations which the Anglo-Japanese agreement was designed to maintain.

Monsieur Bompard asked that what he had told me might be regarded as confidential.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

MINUTE.

This is an important conversation.

We have had no indication of the views of the U[nited] S[tates] Gov[ernmen]t resp[ectin]g the Anglo-Japanese Agreement since they received the text, but when the substance was communicated to the President, he appeared quite satisfied.

* Note that C[oun]t Lamsdorff says there can be no question of resuming the previous Anglo-Russian negotiations at present; and that the German Emperor is making great efforts to induce the Russian Gov[ernmen]t to take some action.

F. A. C.

18 Oct.

L.

No. 199.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. France 3704.

(No. 662.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 17, 1905.

The French Ambassador told me today that, during his visit to Paris, M. Nelidoff had spoken to him with much frankness as to the possibility of an understanding between Great Britain and Russia. Such an understanding was earnestly desired by M. Nelidoff himself and by Count Lamsdorff. They feared however that the matter could not be much advanced at the present time. The resentment created in Russia

by the recently concluded Anglo-Japanese Agreement was deeper than would be supposed from the language used by the Russian Press. We had, M. Cambon observed, fortunately taken the precaution of explaining our policy to the Russian Government in the most considerate terms,⁽¹⁾ and we had thereby disarmed a good deal of hostile criticism. The feeling of hostility nevertheless existed and must be taken into account. For this reason both M. Nelidoff and Count Lamsdorff were not in favour of an early discussion. On the other hand, Germany was taking advantage of the opportunity in order, if possible, to estrange France and England. M. Witte, upon whom his interview with the German Emperor had produced a great effect, was working strenuously for this purpose, and it was suggested that, as Great Britain and Japan had formed a coalition which would give them a preponderating influence in Eastern Asia, the time had come for the other Powers interested in that part of the world to form another coalition by which the balance of power might be maintained. In these circumstances His Excellency could not help thinking that we should do well to be prepared for an exchange of views with the Russian Government at the earliest possible moment. As to this, M. Nelidoff had suggested, and His Excellency thought the suggestion a valuable one, that His Majesty's Government should consider in good time the requirements which would be put forward on behalf of Great Britain whenever the moment arrived for opening negotiations. It was, His Excellency said, Great Britain which had constantly complained of Russian encroachments, and we ought to be in a position to define clearly the grounds of our complaint and the terms which we could afford to accept.

His Excellency referred briefly to the relations of this country with Russia in regard to Afghanistan, Persia and the Near East. I said that in regard to Afghanistan we had already defined our position with considerable distinctness. We had laid it down—and I did not believe that Russia would dispute our contention—that the external relations of Afghanistan must remain under the direction of this country. We had, on the other hand, indicated our readiness to enter into arrangements which would provide for the prompt settlement, by direct negotiation between the Russian and Afghan frontier officials, of purely local disputes having no serious political importance. As to Persia, it seemed to me that the main object should be to put an end to the unfortunate rivalry of the two Powers whom the Persian Government invariably endeavoured to play off against one another, and we of course desired that an equal opportunity should be afforded to our commerce in Persian territory. As for the Near East, I thought it was for Russia, rather than for us, to indicate what she wanted.

I told His Excellency that I had already had an informal discussion with Count Benckendorff, who had given me an account of his views not dissimilar from that just given to me by His Excellency.

[I am, &c.]
L[ANSDOWNE].

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 172-9, Nos. 164-172 (b).]

No. 200.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.

F.O. Russia 1697.

(No. 380.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 20, 1905.

Count Benckendorff asked to see me this morning, and told me that he had been instructed to speak frankly to me with regard to a very serious matter which had recently come to the knowledge of the Russian Government. They had learned from a trustworthy source that during the war, and since the conclusion of peace, negotiations, of which His Majesty's Government were fully cognizant, if they were not actually

parties to them, had been on foot between Japan and Turkey with the object of bringing about co-operation between those two Powers at Constantinople and extending the scope of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement to the Near East.

I told His Excellency that the Russian Government had apparently discovered a mare's nest of prodigious dimensions. No proposal of the kind had ever been on the tapis, nor, to the best of my belief, had such an idea ever been discussed in this country even in unofficial circles. I could not help wondering at the credulity of the Russian Government, and I asked His Excellency whether the terms of the recently concluded Anglo-Japanese Agreement ought not in themselves to have been sufficient to show that neither of the Contracting Parties were likely to encourage a scheme so inconsistent with the carefully limited provisions of that Agreement. I also reminded His Excellency that, when communicating the new Treaty to the Russian Government, you had been instructed to assure them that there were no secret clauses attached to it. His Excellency said that he did not recollect that you had given such an assurance with regard to the absence of secret clauses. He was however greatly relieved by my statement. I asked him whether it was not clear that these rumours were the fabrication of some "agent provocateur" who desired to sow distrust between us.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 201.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1708.
(No. 628.) Confidential.
My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. October 21, 1905.
R. October 31, 1905.*

Since I had the honour to address to Your Lordship my despatch No. 616 of the 14th instant⁽¹⁾ reporting the substance of a conversation between the French Ambassador and Count Lamsdorff, the political situation here has been to a certain extent modified, owing chiefly, I believe, to the language held by Monsieur Bompard on that occasion.

There is, I think, little doubt that Count Lamsdorff was personally unfavourably disposed to any sort of agreement or undertaking with Germany as a counterpoise to the Anglo-Japanese alliance, but being partially under the influence of Count Witte and perhaps acting on instructions from the Emperor, he proposed to the French Ambassador an anti-English coalition with the hope, or even knowledge, that his proposal would be flatly rejected. Monsieur Bompard's uncompromising attitude has evidently sufficed to convince those who harboured unfriendly intentions towards England that the French Government would not countenance them for an instant, and I am reliably informed that the idea of any combination with Germany has now been definitely dropped. This result is all the more satisfactory in view of the fact that, as I hear from a good source, the removal of Count Lamsdorff formed an important item of the German programme, to which the Imperial Rescript of the 19th instant and the high decoration conferred upon Count Lamsdorff afford a satisfactory and reassuring reply.

The extravagantly Germanophil attitude of Count Witte since his return has also shown some modification during the past few days, and he has openly stated that there is now no question of an alliance with Germany and that he is in favour of a policy of friendly isolation of Russia while maintaining the best possible relations with all Foreign Powers and relying upon the French alliance as the corner-stone of Russian policy.

At an interview which I had with Count Lamsdorff yesterday the change in his

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 211-2, No. 198.]

attitude was very marked and his manner was far more friendly than it has been since the communication of the text of the Anglo-Japanese agreement.

He referred with evident satisfaction to Your Lordship's conversations with Count Benckendorff, on October 3 and 5⁽²⁾ relating to Anglo-Russian relations, and on my observing that the tenour of our conversation on the 4th instant (reported in my despatch No. 594 of the same date)⁽³⁾ was almost exactly analogous he remarked that it was a confirmation of the friendly intentions actuating both Governments and was of happy augury for the future.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 204-5, No. 194, and pp. 207-8, No. 196.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 205-7, No. 195.]

No. 202.

Sir C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Russia 1703.

(No. 639.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, D. October 24, 1905.

R. October 31, 1905.

When I announced to Count Lamsdorff a few days ago my intention to leave St. Petersburg tomorrow on leave of absence I told him that as it was a long time since I had had the honour of being received by the Emperor I thought that perhaps His Majesty might care to see me in case he should have any message or communication which he would like me to convey to the King.

Count Lamsdorff replied at once that he was sure that the Emperor would like to see me before I left and an audience of His Majesty was promptly fixed for today at Peterhof.

On being received in private audience by the Emperor I at once conveyed to His Majesty a message which I had received from the King expressing the warmth of his personal sentiments towards him, His Majesty's most earnest desire that the best and most durable relations should be established between England and Russia, and that all important points should be discussed in an amicable spirit and settled as soon as possible. I at the same time added that the King watched with interest the internal reforms which the Emperor had introduced and was about to grant and that a liberal policy would be of the greatest advantage both to the Emperor himself and the Russian people.

At the same time I endeavoured to impress upon the Emperor the sincere desire of His Majesty's Government to maintain friendly relations with Russia, and I pointed out that complete unanimity prevailed in England on this subject, since it constitutes part of the policy not only of the Government but also of the Opposition, while the press without exception was favourably disposed towards the idea. As evidence of the change of sentiment which had taken place I cited the presence in St. Petersburg of Lord Revelstoke who, with the countenance of His Majesty's Government, was endeavouring to negotiate with an international group of bankers a loan to the Russian Government. I added that His Majesty's Government considered, and their opinion was shared by Count Lamsdorff, that in endeavouring to arrive at a settlement of all questions in dispute it would be better not to embark on an ambitious programme but to deal with each question separately until all existing difficulties had been finally removed. The points of difference between the two countries were after all few in number and not of a nature to render agreement impossible. I assured the Emperor that His Majesty's Government entertained no aggressive designs and no desire nor intention of extending the British frontiers beyond their present limits.

The Emperor expressed himself as very gratified at receiving the King's friendly message and as being very desirous of arriving at a friendly agreement with England on all matters in dispute. He assured me that I might accept his word that neither he nor the Russian people desired a policy of expansion or extension of the Russian frontiers, that since both Powers were agreed on the maintenance of the integrity of Persia, all questions connected with Persia should be settled without delay and that the only difficulties which could present themselves would be technical difficulties such as spheres of influence &c., which should be easily adjusted.

I remarked to the Emperor that in the event of an agreement being concluded between England and Russia it was to be hoped that it would not be regarded as directed against any other Power, as has unfortunately been the case with regard to the Anglo-French Agreement and Morocco, that the desire for peace was deeply ingrained in the English people and that without seeking alliances in Europe England was anxious to be on friendly terms with all nations.

The Emperor expressed his assent and observed that he had never understood why the Anglo-French Agreement had been regarded in Germany as directed against that country and added that he regarded the recent revelations in the "Matin" as purely imaginary.

Referring to the Anglo-Japanese Agreement His Majesty made a curious statement to the effect that objection had been taken to it by certain people in Russia as constituting a breach of neutrality, since the Agreement was signed before the conclusion of peace, and it was thought that this fact had given encouragement and moral support to the Japanese. He himself had not shared this view, but there were many who held it.

I told His Majesty that such an idea appeared to me to be very far-fetched, since in one of the Articles of the Agreement it was expressly stated that it was not to apply to the recently concluded war, that negotiations had been in progress since the month of April, and that it was a mere coincidence that the Agreement had been signed a few days before the conclusion of peace. It proved however to have been a fortunate coincidence since it enabled the Japanese to make peace on terms that were acceptable to Russia while without the safety assured to them by the Agreement they would probably have preferred to continue the war. I alluded at the same time to the happy impression produced by the Emperor's recent Manifesto.

The audience lasted nearly an hour during which the Emperor was pleased to discuss many other subjects of secondary importance, but before dismissing me His Majesty asked me to convey a very friendly message to the King expressing his entire acquiescence with the desires expressed in the King's message and giving an assurance that the King could rely on him.

Altogether the impression left on my mind by the interview was of a favourable nature, for the Emperor gave me a positive assurance that he was opposed to a policy of expansion and appeared to reciprocate the desire for the maintenance of friendly relations between the two countries. In talking over the incidents which arose during the war he showed no rancour, nor in his reference to the Anglo-Japanese Agreement did he show any sign of ill-humour. The improvement which has already shown itself in the relations between England and Russia only requires careful fostering to bear fruit in due season.

I have, &c.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. France 3704.

(No. 680.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 25, 1905.

The French Ambassador referred again today to the relations of Great Britain and Russia, about which he had spoken to me on the 17th instant (see my despatch No. 662 of that date).⁽¹⁾ His Excellency said that he had been at Paris since I had last seen him, and had had interesting conversations both with M. Nelidoff and with M. Bompard, who happened to be there. He had gathered from their statements that the prospects of an understanding were rather less favourable than he had imagined. Count Lamsdorff was as well disposed as ever towards this country, and so far as the Russian Government were concerned there was no serious difficulty. But the Emperor had to be reckoned with, and there could be no doubt that he was at this moment much under the influence of the German Emperor, who was in constant correspondence with him and who, on the occasion of the interview between the two Sovereigns at Bjoerkoe, had succeeded in convincing him that this country was actuated by a feeling of hostility towards Russia. An attempt was evidently being made to bring about an arrangement under which France, Russia and Germany would combine as a counterpoise to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. M. Nelidoff had indeed quite recently suggested an idea of this kind to M. Rouvier, by whom he had been told that there could be no question of French participation in such a project. M. Cambon felt sure that the suggestion had been made by Count Lamsdorff's orders, and with the anticipation that it would elicit a refusal.⁽²⁾ The moral of all this, His Excellency said, was that this country should watch for a good opportunity of re-establishing friendly relations with Russia. It was not, in his view, a case for suddenly proposing a comprehensive settlement of outstanding questions, but rather for finding a good excuse to commence an amicable conversation about some subject which obviously required to be dealt with without loss of time. His Excellency thought that such an opportunity might be found in connection with the proposal of the German Emperor that the Powers should withdraw the international troops now stationed in Northern China. At this point His Excellency described to me at some length the manner in which this proposal had been made to the French Government. The German Emperor had telegraphed to President Loubet in the following terms:—

“L'ordre ayant été restauré en Asie par la conclusion de la paix, je propose de faire rentrer les troupes de couverture qui se trouvent échelonnées dans la province de Tschili. Le mode d'évacuation serait fixé par les commandants des contingents en conseil et aura lieu d'un commun accord.

“S[a] M[ajesté] l'Impératrice de Chine est informée.

“Les gardes des Légations à Pékin resteront.”

This message had been received by the President when he was on the point of starting for Spain, and he had returned an answer in the following terms from Hendaye:—

“Je remercie Votre Majesté de sa communication. J'en fais part au Gouvernement qui en délibèrera pour l'échange de vues auquel Elle propose de procéder entre les Puissances intéressées.”

I then informed His Excellency of the purport of the telegram which had been received by King Edward, of the terms of His Majesty's reply, and of my conversation

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 212-3, No. 199.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 205-6, No. 195, and p. 214, No. 201.]

with the German Ambassador on the 24th instant.⁽³⁾ His Excellency thought that, as the question of retaining international troops in Northern China might be regarded as having some connection with the independence of the Chinese Empire, to the recognition of which both Great Britain and Russia were committed, the British and Russian Governments might well discuss the question. I said that I had intended to speak to Count Benckendorff on the subject, and that I would certainly do so.

His Excellency told me that he believed that Russia was a good deal disturbed by the references contained in the Anglo-Japanese Treaty to the "special interests" of Great Britain and Japan.⁽⁴⁾ Those special interests were not clearly defined in the Preamble. I said that I thought that the nature of those special interests was sufficiently indicated in the Articles which followed. Ours had particular reference to India; those of Japan to Corea. His Excellency dwelt upon the fact that the Treaty of Portsmouth, while admitting that Corea was to be under the paramount influence of Japan, recognised that it still maintained its existence as an independent State.⁽⁵⁾ He was anxious to know whether Great Britain intended to have a Representative at Seoul. He felt sure that France would also be ready to maintain one, and he believed that such a step would go far towards reassuring Russia. I promised His Excellency that I would carefully consider the suggestion which he had made.

[I am, &c.]
L[ANSDOWNE].

⁽³⁾ [This conversation is described in a despatch to Sir F. Lascelles No. 277 of October 24, 1905. F.O. Germany (Prussia) 1615. Its substance is sufficiently indicated by the summary given above.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 165-7, No. 155, para. (c) of Preamble and Articles III and IV.]

⁽⁵⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 108, No. 101, Article II.]

III.—THE RAPPROCHEMENT UNDER THE NEW BRITISH ADMINISTRATION, DECEMBER 1905—MAY 1906.

No. 204.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Spring-Rice.

F.O. Russia 1697,
(No. 427.)
Sir,

Foreign-Office, December 19, 1905.

In conversation with the Russian Ambassador today, I said that I had hoped that an Agreement might be reached between Great Britain and Russia with regard to outstanding questions in which both countries were interested. The Ambassador said that he was himself responsible for any negotiations of this kind having been suspended, but he had felt that it was quite impossible to make any progress with them while things in Russia were in their present condition. I said I felt that that must be so, and that of course I should not press any question at this moment, but that, during this inevitable delay, it would be the policy of our Government not to do anything which would make the resumption of negotiations or a settlement more difficult later on. The Ambassador expressed great satisfaction at this, and asked if he might inform his Government of what I had said, to which I readily agreed.

[I am, &c.]
E[DWARD] G[REY].
