

Cavagnari's murder at Kabul should be everlastingly brought up as an argument against sending an officer outside our frontier it is difficult to understand. It is ignoble to the last degree to be scared for all time by what happened then. Cavagnari was murdered. What then? I agree with my old chief and first master in Central Asian politics, Sir Charles Macgregor, that if our agent A was murdered we should have sent up B, and if B was murdered we should have sent up C. Our whole Afghan policy for thirty years past has been frightfully ignominious, and the day will come when we shall bitterly regret not having had an agent at the capital of a country for whose foreign policy we are responsible. At any rate, the fact of barbarian Afghans murdering our representative at Kabul in 1879 was no adequate reason for not sending a representative to Lhasa in 1903.

These, however, are merely my own views. The contention of the Government of India was that, in suggesting a mission to Lhasa, they were merely reviving a proposal which had been supported as far back as 1874 by Sir T. Wade, then British Minister at Peking, and which was almost taking definite shape in 1885-86, when the importance of a Burmese settlement appears to have so impressed itself upon all parties that the Lhasa Mission was sacrificed in order that the signature of the Chinese Government to the Burmese Convention might be obtained. The Government of India considered it a grave misfortune that they should have been diverted from a project of unquestionable importance by the exigencies of political considerations that had not the remotest connection with Tibet. They recommended, therefore, the revival of this precedent, and the firm pursuance of the policy which was then abandoned.

The Government of India regarded the so-called suzerainty of China over Tibet as a constitutional fiction. China was always ready to break down the barriers of ignorance and obstruction and to open Tibet to the civilizing influence of trade, but her pious wishes were defeated by the short-sighted stupidity of the Lamas. In the same way Tibet was only too anxious to meet our