

of affairs on the frontier, and were compelled to recognize that circumstances had recently occurred which threw on them the obligation of placing our relations with the Government of Lhasa upon a more satisfactory footing. And they acknowledged that the proposal to send an armed mission to enter Lhasa, by force if necessary, and establish there a Resident, might, if the issue were simply one between India and Tibet, be justified as a legitimate reply to the action of the Tibetan Government in returning the letters which on three occasions the Viceroy had addressed to them, and in disregarding the Convention with China of 1890. But they stated that they could not regard the question as one concerning India and Tibet alone. The position of China in its relations to the Powers of Europe had been so modified in recent years that it was necessary to take into account those altered conditions in deciding on action affecting what still had to be regarded as a province of China. It was true that we had no desire either to declare a protectorate or permanently to occupy any portion of the country. But measures of that kind might become inevitable if we were once to find ourselves committed to armed intervention.

For the above reasons, the Home Government thought it necessary, before sanctioning a course which might be regarded as an attack on the integrity of the Chinese Empire, to be sure that such action could be justified by the previous action of Tibet, and they had, accordingly, come to the conclusion that it would be premature to adopt measures so likely to precipitate a crisis in the affairs of Tibet as those proposed by the Government of India. They would await, therefore, the result of their reference to the Russian Government, and after those explanations had been received they would be in a better position to decide on the scope to be given to the negotiations with China, and on the steps to be taken to protect India against any danger from the establishment of foreign influence in Tibet.

When the Russian assurances were at length received, the purport of the conversation Lord Lansdowne had held with the Russian Ambassador was at once communicated