

statement he (Count Benckendorff) had made to him as to the manner in which the Russian Government regarded the Tibetan question. They could not help feeling that the invasion of Tibetan territory by a British force was calculated to involve a grave disturbance of the Central Asian situation, and it was most unfortunate that at that moment, when the Russian Government were disposed to enter into an amicable discussion of our relations at the various points where British and Russian interests were in contact—an allusion to the preliminary negotiations for the Anglo-Russian Agreement and *entente cordiale*—an event of this kind, so calculated to create mistrust on the part of Russia, should have occurred.

Lord Lansdowne expressed his great surprise at the excitement which the announcement of the advance seemed to have enacted. He had, he said, already pointed out to the Ambassador that Tibet was, on the one hand, in close geographical connection with India, and, on the other, far remote from any of Russia's Asiatic possessions. Our interest in Tibetan affairs was therefore wholly different from any which Russia could have in them. He reminded Count Benckendorff that he had already explained to him that we had received the greatest provocation at the hands of the Tibetans, who had not only failed to fulfil their treaty obligations, but had virtually refused to negotiate with us. We had always been reluctant to entangle ourselves in quarrels with the Tibetans, but our forbearance had led them to believe that we could be ill-treated with impunity. Lord Lansdowne said he was firmly convinced that the Russian Government would not have shown as much patience as we had, and that they would have been at Lhasa by that time. He felt bound to add that it seemed to him beyond measure strange that these protests should be made by the Government of a Power which had, all over the world, never hesitated to encroach upon its neighbours when the circumstances seemed to require it. If the Russians had a right to complain of us for taking steps to obtain reparation from the Tibetans by advancing into Tibetan territory, what kind of language should we not be entitled