

they are kindly and warm-hearted. But I do not think they would deny—those whom I have met have openly admitted—that politically, their object is to extend their influence over all the countries bordering on their Asiatic Empire, and wherever their influence has been extended to exclude British trade. The policy of the open door finds favour with us because we can beat the Russians in commercial competition. But the Russians prefer the door closed, with themselves inside, and us on the outside. They think that then they have a better chance.

Moreover, in pursuing this policy of absorption and exclusion, they are not afraid to resort to bluff of the most audacious kind. Their advance towards Herat, on to the Pamirs and to Port Arthur, has in each case been carried out by pure unmitigated bluff. And to one who saw them, as I did, scarcely a dozen years ago, crouching behind the Amur frontier in scarcely disguised terror lest the Chinese by land from Manchuria, and ourselves by sea from Port Hamilton, should quietly close the pincers and nip off Vladivostok, the audacity of their coolly asking the Chinese to deliver up their chief naval base, of their asking us to