

How, then, are we to preserve our rights? No one who has moved about in Asia can doubt that we and the Russians are in a state of rivalry. Every year we come closer together in one part of Asia or the other. It is supremely important that we should meet in peace. An honourable understanding between the two powers, defining their respective interests and the guarantees for maintaining them would be of incalculable advantage to both. But such an understanding would be absolutely worthless if the Russians had any reason to believe that it was sought for by us merely through fear of them. It can only be of value when the Russians on their part have realised the need of it. This they apparently do not realise at present, and our recent attempts to come to an understanding with them proved futile.

We can therefore either meet their bluff with bluff on our part, as Beaconsfield did in moving Indian troops to Malta, or else we can continue our policy of countermoves. We have declared ourselves against the policy of bluff as being too risky. There remains the policy of countermoves. The Russian move towards Herat