

has probably been more than counteracted by the strong defensive measures we have taken in the direction of Kandahar. The Russian advance to the Pamirs has certainly been fully counterbalanced by our moves to Hunza and Chitral. Perhaps we may hope that the acquisition of Wei-hai-wei will form a due reply to the Russian lease of Port Arthur. In this way only does it seem possible to prevent the Russians acquiring that political influence which we have so much reason to fear may be exercised to the detriment of our commercial interests.

There is indeed one other method which many advocate for the purpose of staying the advance of Russian influence. It is the policy of bolstering up China. But before we adopt that policy, I think we ought to consider with the utmost attention what it really means. In Turkey, in Persia, in Afghanistan, we have tried a similar policy; we have tried to infuse life into moribund semi-civilised states, and in our selfish interests to use them as buffers against the advance of civilisation. But we have had but small success. After spending millions of money and thousands of lives in support of Turkey, we had very nearly to go to