

pieces, probably those brought by the Forsyth Mission as a present from the Viceroy of India. At an inspection held within the last few years, the inspecting officer wished one of the guns to be fired, but could find no one who understood how to work the pieces. At length an officer, with more gallantry than skill, loaded the gun and fired; but, when he fired, he stood close behind, aiming, so that he was knocked down by the recoil and received such injuries that he died within a few days. Since that exhibition there has been no desire to see the guns at work.

The whole force is distributed among the ten military districts into which the province is divided, about one-third of the cavalry and more than half the infantry being stationed at Yangi Shahr in the neighbourhood of Kashgar. The men, however, of which the force consists, are quite unworthy of the name of soldiers. They are ill-disciplined, ill-armed, ill-clothed, and of very inferior physique; but they have many grievances, and it is not surprising that they are discontented. This force, which cannot by any stretch of courtesy be called an army, may be sufficient to repress insurrection, the purpose for which, according to inscriptions over the doors of barracks, it exists; but for defence against invasion it is utterly useless. The province is absolutely at the mercy of Russia, and will be unfit to offer any resistance when it suits that Power to take it.

The methods by which Russia is working towards that end are, however, not military, but diplomatic. In 1897 she applied to the Chinese for permission to occupy the large grazing ground known as Muluksha, lying on the north side of the Karakoram Pass, on the trade route from Yarkand to Leh. This ground was professedly to be used as a place where Russian caravans could rest, but, as the region was out of the way of Russian trade