In 1836, after Zorawar Singh’s first expedition to Ladakh, the Gyalpo and the heir-apparent of Ladakh, made several representations to Claude Wade, the Governor-General’s Agent at Ladhiana, requesting help against the Dogras. Wade brought these overtures to the notice of Maharaja Ranjit Singh but did not press his point further as the affair “related to the other side of the Sutlej”. In November 1836, the Ladakhi King sent a special agent to Colonel H.T. Tapp, Political Agent at Subathu, seeking British protection and undertaking to pay nazarana to the Company. Although Tapp observed that if the Government took Ladakh under its protection, it would considerably facilitate the commerce of the Company’s territories with Chinese Tartary, yet the Government advised him “not to encourage the Raja to expect our protection.” The hard-pressed Gyalpo did not despair: he sent an embassy.

2 “In consequence of the unprosperous and ruined condition of my country”, the king wrote to Tapp, “I have not been able to pay nuzzarana. I am willing to show loyalty and obedience to the British Government, but I cannot on any account place myself in subjection to the Sikh authority.” (Raja of Ladakh to Tapp, n.d., F.D.P.C., 9 January 1837, No. 24, enclosure No. 1).
3 Tapp to T., Metcalfe (Agent to Lt. Gr., North-West Province, Delhi), 22 November 1836: F.D.P.C., 9 January 1837, No. 24.
4 F.D.P.C., 9 January 1837, No. 25.
5 This embassy consisted of seven men; unfortunately, while in Simla, they contracted smallpox and all of them died. (F.D.P.C., 14 August 1837, No. 7-9; F.D.P.C., 17 July 1837, No. 84).
to Sir Henry Fane, the British Commander-in-Chief, then at Simla, requesting him to procure a parwana from Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and another from his own Government restraining the invaders from further depredations. The British Commander-in-Chief, however replied that "as the country of Ladakh was beyond the limits of the Company's dominions", no aid could be given to the Ladakhi ruler.

Towards the close of 1837, Chog Sprul, the Ladakhi prince, who was being hotly chased by the Dogras escaped into the British-protected territory of Bashahr. But for the prompt measures taken by the British authorities, the Dogras might have entered Bashahr and whisked the prince away. The British sympathised with the fugitive prince and Wade recommended to the Supreme Government that in addition to providing political asylum to the refugee, "a suitable allowance" should also be granted to him for his subsistence. In Wade's opinion,

1 Jank Raftan Numkin (Raja of Ladakh) to C-in-C., 30 August 1837: F.D.P.C., 20 December 1837, No. 7.

2 F.D.P.C., 20 December 1837, No. 8. In an earlier communication on this subject, the G-G had written to the C-in-C "that no hope of assistance can be held out to the Raja of Ladakh with whom the British Government have no political connection" (F.D.P.C., 17 July 1837, No. 85).

3 On coming to know that the fugitive prince was being pursued by the Dogras, Col. Tapp immediately issued a proclamation that any armed force passing the frontier into Bashahr in pursuit of the son of the Raja of Ladakh will be considered in the light of enemies to the British Government. (Tapp to Wade, 31 October 1837: F.D.P.C., 17 January 1838, No. 26). Captain Wade also wrote to Lt. Mackeson (his assistant then staying with Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Lahore) to ask the Maharaja to issue an order to Raja Gulab Singh to withdraw his troops from Bashahr frontier "where their presence while an object of alarm to a chief who is living under the protection of the British Government is likely to be viewed with any but friendly feelings by the Governor-General of India. (Wade to Mackeson, 15 November 1837: F.D.P.C., 17 January 1838, No. 26).

4 Wade to Government, 1 March 1838: F.D.P.C., 8 August 1838, No. 28.
such a policy of providing shelter to the royal refugee
was likely to show

both to the Maharaja and his vassals the Dogra
brothers that we are not insensible to that
system of wanton encroachment on their neigh­
bours which has produced on the Indus a state
of tumult and disorder, which threatens to
introduce on the banks of that river a combina­
tion of new influences perhaps to the peace of
our Government than that of the Maharaja.

Wade's recommendations were accepted: the Ladakhi
prince was given political asylum, though the measure was
"not altogether free from risk of political embarrass­
ment." A stipened of Rs. 200 per mensem was also sanca­
tioned to the royal fugitive, and in addition a house at
Kotgarh was rented for him at Rs. 800 per annum.

Ahmad Shah, the Balti Gyalpo, as noted earlier, was very much afraid of the Sikhs and was quite anxious
to place himself under British protection. There was a
frequent exchange of letters between him and Wade. In
response to Wade's wish, Ahmad Shah procured intelligence
of passing events in Eastern (Chinese) Turkestan. He

1 Wade to Government, 1 March 1838: F.D.P.C.,
8 August 1838, No. 28.

2 Government to Wade, 10 March 1838: F.D.P.C.,
8 August 1838, No. 29.

3 Governor-General to Secret Committee, 4 April
1838, No. 10.

4 See supra pp. 167-70.

5 The British at that time were interested in
the commercial potentialities of China and were anxious
to know the internal political affairs of that country. Ahmad Shah despatched special messengers to Eastern
Turkestan and informed Wade that at that time there was
no peace and a revolt had broken out against the Manchus.
Wade passed on this information to the Supreme Govern­
ment and it corroborated with the intelligence gathered
by the Select Committee at Canton. Hereafter, the
Governor-General desired Wade to continue to procure
such intelligence. Wade to Macnaughten (Secretary,
Government of India), 15 September 1835: F.D.P.C., 5
October 1835, No. 3-2-A.
promised to provide the English, should they be interested, safe passage through his country to Yarkand. Ahmad Shah further offered to co-operate with the Company in the scheme of opening the navigation of the Indus to commerce by engaging the merchants from his part of the world to send their merchandise by way of Rupar. The Balti ruler wrote to Wade:

It must not be concealed that from the beginning, I have been moved by an anxiety beyond bounds to connect myself with the well-wishers and faithful servants of your Government by ties of friendship and to identify myself without reserve with their interests.

Wade, reciprocating Ahmad Shah’s friendly gestures replied:

British Government has a due regard for everyone with whom it has any amicable relations, I as well as Government which I serve are aware of your sentiments of attachment and friendship.

These remarks of Wade, though couched in terms and professions of general amity, were misconstrued by Ahmad Shah. He thought that the British had thereby extended their protection over Baltistan. When Raja Gulab Singh asked Ahmad Shah to enter into friendly relations with him, the Balti ruler curtly replied that "by dint of perseverance he had been able to bring himself

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1 Ahmad Shah to Wade, no date, letter No. 1, F.D.P.C., 5 October 1835, No. 53-A.
2 Wade to Secretary, 20 April 1836, Ahmad Shah to G-G., no date, F.D.P.C., 23 May 1836, Nos. 109-110.
3 It appears, Ahmad Shah wrongly thought that the Indus passed through Rupar. Actually it is the Sutlej river which flows through Rupar.
4 Ahmad Shah to Wade, no date, letter No. 4, F.D.P.C., 5 October 1835, No. 53-A.
5 Wade to Ahmad Shah, 23 February 1834: F.D.P.C., 5 October 1835, No. 53-A.
within the shadow of Huma, so he did not bother about the friendship of the Jammu Raja.

When in the late eighteen-thirties, G. Vigne, an English traveller, visited Baltistan, his presence was regarded as an important event by Ahmad Shah, who like Nawab Jabbar Khan of Kabul, manifested a strong natural predilection for the intimacy and friendship of Europeans. Through Vigne, the Balti ruler tried to interest Wade in his claims over a jagir in Kashmir and some possessions in Purig, which at that time were controlled by the Sikhs, but in the past had been the possessions of Ahmad Shah's ancestors. In reply to a reference about such claims of the Balti ruler, the Governor-General enjoined on Wade that although

no proper opportunity ought to be omitted of cultivating a friendly understanding with this Chief, but you must be careful, not to use any expression, which could excite in him a hope of our interposing on his behalf with any of his neighbours.

Unfortunately for Ahmad Shah, that moment arrived which he had been trying to avert for the last twenty years: in November 1839, Zorawar Singh invaded Baltistan. Hard pressed Ahmad Shah sent two of his sons

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1 Huma is a bird of fable; it is said that he who comes under its shadow acquires prosperity. Verily, no one avoids its shadow, Ahmad Shah compared the British to Huma.

2 Wade to Macnaughten, 30 December 1836: F.D.P.C., 30 January 1837, No. 28.


4 Ibid.

5 Governor-General to Wade, 23 May 1836: F.D.P.C., 23 May 1836, No. 112.

6 For details about Zorawar's invasion of Baltistan, see supra pp. 167-79.
to the Political Agent at Ludhiana, and repeatedly sought British help. "I long ago", wrote the Balti Gyalpo to the Political Agent, "put myself under the only asylum, the British protection and considered myself among the dependents." Ahmad Shah further wrote that since long he considered Baltistan as the country of the British Government, and looked upon himself merely as the Governor of a garrison appointed by the British.

Although at one time, the British Government contemplated interceding on behalf of the Balti ruler, and remonstrate "in friendly language" with the Lahore Durbar, later it gave up the idea and veered round to its earlier policy of non-interference in such affairs. The Governor-General instructed George Russel Clerk, Wade's replacement at Ludhiana, that on the question of Dogra subversion of Baltistan "there can be no reason for interference on the part of this Government."

Although British policy towards the Gyalpos of Ladakh and Baltistan, who made repeated solicitations for help remained non-committal, yet with Zorawar Singh's invasion of Western Tibet, the British attitude vis-a-vis the Dogras changed. In the late eighteen-thirties due to disorder and unrest in Ladakh and Baltistan, trade

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1. These two brothers were detained at Srinagar by the Sikh Governor of Kashmir.
4. Ibid.
5. Governor-General to Clerk, 1 March 1841: F.D.S.C., 1 March 1841, No. 129.
of Western Tibet with Bashahr and other British-protected hill states increased enormously, albeit to the detri-
ment of that with Ladakh and Kashmir. In 1837, the first year for which some figures are available, the quantity of shawl wool imported from Western Tibet into Bashahr was 1080 maunds, which rose to 1548 maunds in 1840. The total trade of Bashahr in 1837 was valued at Rs. 55,529; in 1840, this figure increased to Rs. 109,807, thus in four years registering a steep increase of nearly two hundred per cent. With the arrival of Dogra forces in Western Tibet, these commercial benefits disappeared: the flow of shawl wool and other commodities into Bashahr dwindled beyond all expectations - in 1841, the quantity of shawl wool imported fell to 169 maunds, and the total trade was valued at Rs. 19,679.

J.C. Erskine, Political Agent at Subathu, reported that the Sikhs were determined to stop all trade between Chinese Tartary and Bashahr. By occupying Spiti and adjacent areas, the Dogras had already cut the tracks on one hand between Bashahr and Ladakh, and on the other between Bashahr and other countries to the north and west of Ladakh. Bashahi traders, who carried their trade with Ladakh were also assessed and duty was levied

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1 Cunningham to Clerk, 14 December 1841: F.D.S.C., 24 January 1842, No. 20.
2 Same to same, 27 May 1842: F.D.S.C., 22 June 1842, No. 36.
3 F.D.S.C., 24 January 1842, No. 20.
4 F.D.S.C., 22 June 1842, No. 36.
5 Erskine to Hodgson (Resident in Nepal), 20 July 1841: F.D.S.C., 23 August 1841, No. 65.
on goods which entered into Western Tibet from Bashahr. This was unlike the previous arrangements: under an old agreement between the Raja of Ladakh and Bashahr, the subjects of the latter traded freely with the possessions of the former. It was also reported that Zorawar had issued an order prohibiting the export of shawl wool and borax from Western Tibet to Bashahr. Five Bashahri traders who defied this order were murdered and many others were robbed of their property and imprisoned.

Apart from the commercial losses and indignities sustained by the traders of Bashahr, its Raja was afraid that the Dogras wanted to seize his trans-Sutlej possessions. Rumours were afloat of Zorawar's intention to occupy Kinnaur, the north-eastern district of Bashahr, a part of which was situated to the north of the Sutlej and was contiguous with Ladakh and West Tibet. Certainly, there was evidence that the Dogra brothers for the last several years, had been trying to ascertain the position of the trans-Sutlej possessions of Bashahr, ultimately, with a view to annexing these with the Sikh dominions. In 1838, Raja Dhian Singh had secretly despatched his agent, named Devi Singh, "One of the most notorious intriguers about the court of Lahore" to Bashahr. Devi Singh’s objects were to inveigle the

1 Cunningham to Clerk, 23 November 1841: F.D.S.C., 27 December 1841, No. 37; F.D.S.C., 34 January 1842, No. 20; F.D.S.C., 9 November 1842, No. 61.

2 F.D.S.C., 27 December 1841, No. 37.

3 Raja of Bashahr to Erskine, Political Agent at Subathu, 6 September 1841: F.D.S.C., 25 October 1841, No. 23.

4 Cunningham to Clerk, 21 October 1841: F.D.S.C., 22 November 1841, No. 23.
Ladakhi prince to recross the Sutlej, and to ascertain the circumstances under which the Raja of Bashahr held his possessions to the north of the Sutlej. Wade, then Political Agent at the Sikh Court had informed his Government that

Ranjit Singh has hitherto advanced no pretensions to the supremacy of the trans-Sutlej possessions of the Raja of Bashahr and if left to himself would be unlikely to do so, but Raja Dhian Singh or his brother will do as they have done in Ladakh, first try to introduce their authority and then make it a point of honour with their master to maintain his claim.

In 1841, the Lahore Durbar sent two persons named Jiwan Singh and Ganeshi Dass to Rampur to enter into certain enquiries connected with the frontiers of Bashahr. On the other hand, Raja Gulab Singh under his signature "Takado Jeno Sree Ram Jyen" also wrote to Wazir Zorawar Singh to send a sketch of the boundaries of the Bashahr territory and the neighbouring countries to Jiwan Singh and Ganeshi Das. It was said that these emissaries demanded a daughter of the Raja of Bashahr.

The Ladakhi prince had been granted political asylum in Bashahr; the Dogra brothers regarded his presence there dangerous to the permanence of their authority in Ladakh, and therefore were anxious to entice the royal fugitive back to Ladakh where either he was to be incarcerated or poisoned. (F.D.S.C., 8 August 1838, No. 28).

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
5 This was the "autograph signature" of Raja Gulab Singh which he had adopted in matters connected with the foreign affairs, probably, without the information of the Lahore Durbar. Ibid.
Bashahr in marriage for one of the sons of Raja Gulab Singh, and threatened in case of refusal to seize the trans-Sutlej possessions of Bashahr.¹

The British reaction to these proceedings of the Dogras was one of surprise and unease. For a time neither the real intentions of the invaders, nor the true extent of their ambition was very clear. Clerk had addressed the Lahore Durbar a number of times soliciting information regarding Zorawar's objective and movements in Western Tibet,² but the usual reply which he received was that the "Sikh Government had not received any intelligence from that quarter."³ Clerk wrote to his superiors that the replies of the Durbar in this case were dictated by Raja Dhian Singh, and would continue to be so until the Maharaja was alarmed at the prospect of the consequences of the dissatisfaction of the British Government.⁴ In August 1841, Clerk suggested to the Supreme Government that some perfect system of intelligence of passing events, on the eastern frontiers of Chinese Tartary should be instituted, otherwise ... it may hereafter be found that a convenient means of introducing a vigilant superintendence there has been omitted, and that the substance has been abandoned for the shadow.⁵

¹F.D.S.C., 22 November 1841, No. 23.
²Clerk to Maharaja Sher Singh, 27 August 1841: F.D.S.C., 20 September 1841, No. 65, enclosure No. 1, F.D.S.C., 27 September 1841, No. 42.
³F.D. Sec. Progs., 18 October 1841, No. 67.
⁴Clerk to Maddock, 9 September 1841: F.D.S.C., 27 September 1841, No. 69.
⁵Same to same, 10 August 1841: F.D.S.C., 30 August 1841, No. 89.
Such a system, he opined, was that a competent British agent should go to that area and see things with his own eyes; his presence would interrupt "political intrigues, should Zorawar or his master have conceived any in that quarter, detrimental or embarrassing to the interests of the British Government or its allies."¹

In pursuance of this advice, Lieutenant Joseph Davey Cunningham, the future historian of the Sikhs, and at that time Clerk's assistant at Ludhiana was appointed on a special political mission and was asked to travel up the Sutlej to a point near the Tibetan frontier where active hostilities were going on between the Dogras and the Tibetans.² Cunningham's duties were manifold: he was instructed to inquire the intentions of Wazir Zorawar Singh or his subordinates in advancing to or towards Rudok and subsequently moving down upon Gartok and Manasarowar, the number and description of troops with which he or his officers had captured the latter place and the other places lying between that and the Niti pass, his tenure of the district of Chumurti, the cause or pretext of these encroachments, and the nature and ramifications of the trade which for sometime past had been a bone of contention on the one hand between Yarkand and Ladakh and on the other between Bashahr and Ladakh.³

¹ F.D.S.C., 30 August 1841, No. 89.
² Bhandari Family Archives Papers, S. No. 328, Register A, Pt. III, Letter dated 27 September 1841, from Clerk to Maharaja Sher Singh (Persian MSS. Pb. S.A.); see also, F.D.S.C., 28 September 1841, No. 71.
The crux of the problem was shawl wool. The figures showing the rapid rise of this commodity into Bashahr from 1837 to 1840 and then steep fall in 1841, which Cunningham so diligently collected, have already been noted. Clerk, under instructions from his Government asked the Lahore Durbar to restrain Zorawar Singh from molesting the trade and territory of Bashahr.\(^1\) In this connection, in reply to an order issued by the Lahore Government, Zorawar Singh observed:

> The fact is that a quantity of pusham for shawls and of tea was usually imported to Cashmere, but it was since a year or two that the merchants purchased these commodities very dear and imported these to Hindoostan and thereby greatly injured the shawl manufacture of Cashmere.\(^2\)

The British Government was incensed at this reply, and immediately wrote to Clerk that the explanation offered by Zorawar Singh of his reasons for interfering with the course of trade beyond the frontiers of Bashahr was quite inadmissible. It further stated that if the object of Dogra encroachments along the northern line of the Himalayan range was to establish for themselves a monopoly of the trade of that region, such a measure was quite deleterious to the British-protected hill states.\(^3\) The Governor-General, therefore directed his Agent to insist upon the immediate withdrawal of all road restrictions imposed on trade by the Dogras and to impress on the Maharaja that

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\(^1\)F.D.S.C., 6 September 1841, No. 42.

\(^2\)Wazir Zorawar Singh to Lahore Government, no date: F.D.S.C., 6 September 1841, No. 43.

\(^3\)Government to Clerk, 6 September 1841: F.D.S.C., 6 September 1841, No. 44.
In the peculiarly intimate relations which subsist between the British and Lahore Governments such pleas as that advanced by Zorawar Singh are of a kind which ought not to be admitted by either of the allied parties and certainly ought not to be communicated with any semblance of concurrence and support, the justification of an unfriendly, and almost hostile proceedings.

The Dogras continued their successful depredations, and soon occupied all Tibetan territory to the east of Kumaon. This occupation, like the case of the Bashahri traders earlier, brought many sufferings for Bhotias, the residents of Kumaon and Garhwal. The latter's condition was even more unfortunate because the Dogra invasion had occurred at a time when they were preparing to cross the Himalayas for carrying commercial transactions. Trade was the only source of their livelihood. It was quite profitable, and was carried on during certain seasons of the year by barter. There was great consternation and excitement among the Hunias, the counterparts of the Bhotias in Western Tibet and most of them, leaving behind their hearths and homes had fled to the neighboring territories. Therefore trade of

\[\text{1} \text{F.D.S.C., 6 September 1841, No. 44.}\]

\[\text{2} \text{For detailed explanation, see supra p. 189 fn(2).}\]

\[\text{3} \text{During 1840-41, imports from Western Tibet into Kumaon amounted to Rs. 155,700, and exports from the latter to the former were valued at Rs. 79,375, thus giving the Kumaon traders a profit of nearly one hundred per cent. (Lushington, Commissioner of Kumaon, to Thomason, Secretary, N.W. Province, 27 August 1841: F.D.S.C., 20 September 1841, No. 27).}\]

\[\text{4} \text{The Bhotias exchanged the wheat and rice of Kumaon and Garhwal, and "the broadcloth and other articles of English manufacture" for the salt and borax of West Tibet. Lushington to Thomason, 25 August 1841: F.D.S.C., 13 September 1841, No. 20.}\]
this area for all practical purposes was at a standstill. The poor Bhotias, who had made their purchases for making their annual trip to the Tartary on the other side of the Himalayan crest were obliged either to suffer the privations resulting from its cancellation, or to run the grave risks involved in visiting Western Tibet at such a juncture. Fear of an imminent economic ruin stalked the country. The Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Province cautioned the Government that the Dogra occupation of Western Tibet was fraught with much future mischief and calculated if not promptly met eventually to imperil the prosperity and tranquillity not only of Kumaon, but of all our frontier provinces.2

But that was not all. The proximity of the Dogra rule to the states under British protection raised another problem: the natives of Western Tibet, in order to save themselves from the rapacity of the invaders sought shelter in British territories; this provided the Dogras with a plea for incursions into the states under British protection.3 On September 15, 1841, one Kesra Singh, a Dogra official accompanied by some soldiers entered the Pargannah of Byans in Kumaon and demanded from the Bhotias, in the name and by order of Zorawar Singh, who was "equal of any English Governor-General", the revenues or dues formerly paid by them to the Tibetan authorities.4

1F.D.S.C., 13 September 1841, No. 20.
2F.D.S.C., 30 August 1841, No. 27.
3Minute of Lieutenant-Governor, N.W. Province, 28 September 1841: F.D.S.C., 11 October 1841, No. 50.
4Lushington to Secretary (N.W. Province), 23 September 1841: F.D.S.C., 11 October 1841, No. 46.
When the Bhotias refused to comply with this demand, they were threatened with dire consequences and a small sum was extorted from them. Zoravar had also issued a hukam namah directing the Bhotias to pay him all the dues which they had hitherto been paying to the Tibetan authorities. Now, it appeared, as if the sovereignty of the British-protected hill territories was about to be violated.

Yet, of greater concern was the likelihood of an anti-British Dogra-Sikh-Napalese rapprochement and the fear of Chinese intervention and consequent approach of the Chinese army to the Indian frontier — an aspect discussed towards the end of the present chapter. All these considerations spelt out in the preceding pages made the restraining of the Dogras a compelling necessity for the British. The progress of the war and its consequential ramifications established that mere vigilance and alertness were not enough. Once the war affected the commercial and political interests of the British, sterner measures were felt to be imperative. Thomason, Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor N.W. Province warned that

If we submit to this injury, loss of influence and loss of consideration must inevitably follow, and the arrogance and presumption of our neighbours will be proportionally increased. The value of the trade from a political point of view is of little moment, but the simple fact of its being stopped for any length of time must dispirit our own people and give

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1 F.D.S.C., 11 October 1841, No. 46.  
2 Ibid., see also, F.D.S.C., 11 October 1841, No. 50.  
3 See infra pp. 234-47.
confidence to those who have achieved this act, to attempt others.  

The Governor-General instructed Clerk to inform Maharaja Sher Singh that it was impossible "for the British Government to hear without displeasure of outrages of this atrocious nature against its subjects or those of its dependents", and that if Zorawar Singh were not restrained, the long standing Anglo-Sikh amity would be irreparably damaged. Fort William brought heavy pressure to bear on the Sikh ruler to recall the Dogra general and his troops within the former boundaries of Ladakh, and set a deadline (December 10, 1841), for the withdrawal of the Dogra forces.  

If compliance was not made by that date then "it will remain open to the British Government, to adopt its own measures for curbing the unwarrantable and hostile proceedings of those under whose direction Zorawar is acting." The Lahore Durbar was also asked to give signal punishment to Kesra Singh and his party and adequately compensate the Bhotias who had been assessed for the payment of revenue by the Dogras. J. D. Cunningham, who had already been deputed to West Tibet, was asked to witness

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1 Thomason to Maddock, 4 September 1841: F.D.S.C., 13 September 1841, No. 19.
2 Governor-General to Clerk, 1 November 1841: F.D.S.C., 1 November 1841, No. 38.
3 Bhandari Family Archives Papers, S. No. 329, Register A, Pt. III, Letter dated 19 October 1841 from Clerk to Maharaja Sher Singh (Persian MSS, Pb. S.A.). See also, F.D.S.C., 22 November 1841, No. 16.
4 Government to Clerk, 8 October 1841: F.D.S.C., 11 October 1841, No. 47.
5 Ibid.
and report on its evacuation by the Dogras. The Maharaja was further told that the Governor-General was aware that the invasion of Chinese Tartary was the act of the Dogra Rajas, undertaken for their own private gains, and perhaps without the knowledge of the Lahore Durbar, but the responsibility for such proceedings, lay squarely on the Durbar itself, and it was the Maharaja’s duty to put an instant stop to their aggressions either by his own means or if those are not adequate to the purpose by uniting with the British Government to affect that object.

These stern measures of the British paid dividends: Maharaja Sher Singh immediately ordered Zorawar Singh to move back within the former possessions of Ladakh. Furthermore he was asked to present rupees 525 as a seefat and rupees 125 as sarwaran to Lieutenant Cunningham; the Wazir was also desired to procure a ‘Nazeenama’ or certificate of satisfaction from the British observer in West Tibet (Cunningham). The Maharaja also assured Clerk that orders had been issued to indemnify the Bhotias, Kesra Singh and his party, who were said to have perpetrated atrocities

\(^1\)Clerk to Cunningham, 25 October 1841: F.D.S.C., 8 November 1841, No. 45; F.D.S.C., 11 October 1841, No. 47.

\(^2\)Government to Clerk, 16 August 1841: F.D.S.C., 11 October 1841, No. 47.

\(^3\)Same to same, 20 September 1841: F.D.S.C., 20 September 1841, No. 66.

\(^4\)Clerk to Maddock, 31 October 1841: F.D.S.C., 22 November 1841, No. 18, enclosing the Translation of a letter from Maharaja Sher Singh to Clerk, F.D.S.C., 22 November 1841, No. 20.

\(^5\)For meaning, see supra p. 157 f(^4^).

\(^6\)F.D.S.C., 22 November 1841, No. 18.
on the British subjects had been summoned to Lahore where they were to be suitably punished. Sher Singh admitted too that he could not afford to impair his amicable relations with the British. But, even before his orders could reach Zorawar Singh or be acted upon, a large Tibetan army had already moved from Lhasa. In the depth of winter, it surrounded the Dogras and after fighting some pitched actions, defeated and killed Zorawar Singh on December 12, 1841. By a strange coincidence, the British demand for the withdrawal of Zorawar Singh and his troops within a specified date was completely fulfilled, though in a manner, different from the one desired by the concerned parties.

The Tibetan army, having made a short work of the Dogra troops, swooped down upon Ladakh and laid siege to Leh. In this reversed situation what should be the British policy? Now that the Dogras, as was desired by them had been expelled from Western Tibet, should the Tibetans be restrained from attacking Ladakh, which the British recognised for the past so many years as a Sikh protectorate? Clerk's considered view was that the British need not care to restrain the Lhasa troops from releasing Ladakh from the Sikhs, but they should interfere to prevent the "extension of Chinese authority west of Ladakh." To prevent any violation of the British frontier, Cunningham had suggested the

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1 Clerk to Government, 4 November 1841: F.D.S.C., 22 November 1841, No. 20.
2 Ibid.
3 For details, see supra pp. 191-95.
advisability of posting a small force close to the frontier and constructing a small fort at the strategically important border outpost of Changlu in Kinnaur. Clerk, agreeing with Cunningham had advised his Government to strengthen the border by posting the 'Nusseree' and the 'Sirmoor' battalions on the frontier, so that they would "act promptly for protection or for interference, or it would give weight to advice." The Supreme Government, however, rejected these recommendations as it did "not contemplate any armed interference in disputes beyond the mountains", and desired Cunningham simply to be a "looker on". Thus, after the Dogras had been expelled from Western Tibet, the British attitude was no longer hostile towards them, and they (British) reverted to their earlier policy of non-interference.

Yet the outbreak of Anglo-Afghan hostilities made British neutrality somewhat difficult to maintain. Early in 1842, after suffering a disaster in Afghanistan the British were anxious to avenge these opprobrious and annihilating defeats. But they were in a desperate situation: their own base was far away, and for maintaining their lines of communications they badly needed help from the Lahore Durbar. The latter asked Raja Gulab Singh, who at that time was suppressing rebellions in

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1 F.D.S.C., 20 July 1842, No. 60.
3 Government to Clerk, 25 May 1842: F.D.S.C., 6 July 1842, No. 43.
4 Same to same, 24 January 1842: F.D.S.C., 24 January 1842, No. 62.
Hazara to co-operate with the British relief expedition which was being organised at Peshawar. The Raja rendered good help in arranging provisions and carriage, and contributed to the safe transit of General Pollock's army through the Khai bar pass. At this time news reached him of the debacle which had overtaken Zorawar and his army in Western Tibet. Naturally he was much grieved and pressed the Lahore Durbar to allow him to go to Jammu or Kashmir, whence he could arrange reinforcements for safeguarding his possessions in Ladakh. His anxiety for the safety of his dominions was fully shared by his brother, Raja Dhian Singh. Clerk informed his Government that

the first present object of the Minister's (Dhian Singh) anxiety is the critical position of his dominion in Ladakh, and in so far as this places Cashmere in jeopardy, the Maharaja is also dissatisfied with the reports that are received of the hostile intentions of the Chinese authorities, and the rebellions of the Ladakhis instigated by them.

He further wrote that the assistance of the Sikhs in terms of soldiers, supplies, and carriage to the English in their war with the Afghans, "will have to be compensated sooner or later and this may prove embarrassing; or it may be ill-requited, and that will be dishonourable." Raja Gulab Singh also appears to have been conscious of it; he requested active military aid from the British. The latter were in a very

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1Clerk to Government, 18 May 1842: F.D.S.C., 2 November 1842, No. 29.
2Ibid.
3Capt. H.M. Lawrence (Assistant Agent to G-G., Peshawar) to Clerk, 5 May 1842: F.D.S.C., 8 June 1842, Nos. 47-48.
uncomfortable position. If they did not assist the Sikhs what will be the attitude of the Lahore Durbar? Would it not weaken British position vis-a-vis Afghanistan?

On the contrary, if they did render active military help to the Sikhs in their renewed trans-Himalayan expedition, would it not affect the Sino-English parleys then taking place in China bringing hostilities in the first Opium War to a close? The British, did not give military assistance to the Sikhs and simply wished success to their relief expedition. Protection of British commercial interests in China by re-establishing cordial relations with the Manchu Emperor was thus far more important than giving help to Raja Gulab Singh.

Nevertheless, requests of Gombo, advisor to the young Ladakhi King and the virtual ruler of Ladakh for British help against the Dogras were turned down.

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1 Governor-General to Clerk, 21 March 1842: F.D.S.C., 21 March 1842, No. 95. Mr. W.W. Bird, a member of the Supreme Council, however, was of the opinion that instead of expressing a pious wish for the Lahore Durbar the latter should have been assured that "in the event of their offering us real and effectual assistance on the present occasion [first Anglo-Afghan War] they might depend upon us to assist them in return should their possessions on the side of Ladakh, be exposed to danger in consequence. Such an assurance, I collect from Mr. Clerk's letters, would have removed at once all their disinclination towards us, and have induced them to lend us that aid which we may otherwise look for in vain. Nor it would have been attended with any risk, which we have not to incur even were no assurance to be given. For unless the Chinese come down in such strength, as the Lahore Government is unable to resist, our assistance will not be required, and if they do, our interposition will be immediately necessary for the safety of our own territories," (Minute by W.M. Bird, 27 March 1842: F.D.S.C., 30 March 1842, No. 2).

2 Gumbo to Cunningham, 18 April 1842: F.D.S.C., 6 July 1842, No. 42.

3 Cunningham to Gumbo, 3 May 1842, Ibid.
J.D. Cunningham, who was then on the frontier, was asked to act as mediator if this should prove acceptable to the Dogras. Lord Ellenborough, then Governor-General, even offered a quid pro quo to Raja Gulab Singh: if the latter abandoned his schemes of conquering trans-Himalayan territories, then the British would allow him to conquer territory lying between the right bank of the Indus, the Suffed Koh-Kang and the Himalayas. In order to facilitate the accomplishment of this object, the British were further willing to place Jallalabad in the hands of the Dogras. Tempting as it must have looked, this was not acceptable to Raja Gulab Singh, who fully understood that the new territory which the British desired him to conquer, due to its insulated position was not of much use to him, whereas Ladakh and Western Tibet were contiguous to the Dogra dominions.

The British were unlikely to gain any credit, even if they assisted the Tibetans against the Dogras. Cunningham observed that British intervention though solicited by the Tibetans would "be studiously concealed from the Emperor" by the Chinese Governors, who would "garble the truth". Even English mediation, "would be left untold."

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2 Governor-General to Clerk, 27 April 1842: F.D.S.C., 1 June 1842, No. 25; see also, F.B. Sec. Progs., 2 November 1842, No. 30-A.
3 Ibid.
4 Cunningham to Clerk, 24 September 1842: F.D.S.C., 11 January 1843, No. 42.
5 Ibid. Cunningham's observation about the Chinese and Tibetan officials that they would misrepresent the facts to the Ch'ing Emperor is remarkably correct. From Chinese and Tibetan documents we learn that these officials usually obfuscated the facts and conveyed distorted versions of the real happenings on the frontier to the Manchu Emperor. Cf. Fisher et al, Himalayan Battleground, Appen. pp. 155-76 et passim.
Tibetan rule was not beneficial in another way also. Cunningham, in his anxiety to restore the commercial traffic of Bashahr with Western Tibet had written to Kalon Surkhang, the Tibetan Commander, in general terms desiring that for the promotion of trade between the two states, no impediments should be put by the Tibetan authorities.\(^1\) Surkhang's reply was that if the people of Bashahr proved in the presence of the people of Ladakh that in the past they traded in these commodities, then they will be permitted to carry trade, but "if it is otherwise and the people of Bashahr took advantage of the disturbances consequent of Zorawar Singh's arrival, to trade in shawl wool, they cannot be allowed to continue this trade according to the present orders of the Lhasa rulers to me."\(^2\) In reply to another communication from Cunningham on the same subject, Surkhang's rejoinder was that "although throughout Bhot", there was profit on the trade in shawl wool, yet it was not the practice of the Rajas of that country to interfere with any old custom.\(^3\) J.H. Batten, Senior Assistant Commissioner of Kumaon, had also reported that

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\(^1\) Cunningham to Surkhang, 6 July 1842: F.D.S.C., 31 August 1842, No. 65, enclosure No. 1.

\(^2\) Surkhang to Cunningham, 20 July 1842: F.D.S.C., 5 October 1842, No. 75.

\(^3\) Same to same, 16 August 1842: F.D.S.C., 12 October 1842, No. 84.
the temper of the Chinese, towards our Bhotias has been most oppressive and haughty and the latter say of the two, they would far prefer the Sikhs under Zorawar Singh to the Chinese under Kulam Singh Kevang [Kalon Surkhang].

The Dogras and the Tibetans, realising the futility of carrying the war any longer, though not without measuring each other's strength and without British participation, signed a treaty of peace on September 17, 1842. The terms of this treaty, except the one relating to the export of shawl wool from Western Tibet to Ladakh, conformed to the wishes of the British. The latter would have liked the contracting parties to modify this clause, but as the Sikhs and the Chinese were independent, nothing could be done at that time. However, the British, as will be noticed in the following chapter, attempted to do this in 1846, when they became the paramount power vis-a-vis the Dogras.

NEPAL'S REACTIONS

After the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-16, as has been noted earlier, the British by seizing Kumaon, Garhwal and the adjacent hill states had created a wedge of territory between the Lahore and Kathmandu Durbars, thus destroying all possibilities of a direct contact between the two states. Ranjit Singh was conscious of it and had noted with regret

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1 Batten to Secretary (N.W. Province), 9 December 1841: F.D.S.C., 27 December 1841, No. 17.
2 For details, see pp. 291-92 Appendix E.
the expulsion of the Gurkhas from this mountaneous region. It is worthwhile to quote the following significant words which in 1814, the Maharaja used in a private conversation with Bhai Gurbaksh Singh, Dhana Singh Malwai and others:

Though apparently sincere friendship is supposed to exist between myself and the English people, yet in reality our relations are merely formal and conventional. Therefore, I had thought out to myself that in case the English should act differently in their dealings with me, I would call upon the Gurkhas and make friends with them and in case they showed any hesitation I intended to make over the fort of Kangra to them to win their comradeship. Now they have been expelled from the mountains and it cannot be said when they would cherish a desire for the above mentioned region. I never expected such a thing to happen that mountainous regions would be evacuated by them suddenly.

In the late eighteen-thirties when the British decided to set bounds to the Maharaja's ambitions on the west as they had already done on the east and south, Ranjit Singh felt dissatisfied with his erstwhile friends. The importance of the words which he had used in 1814 becomes clear: the exchange of missions between Nepal and the Lahore Durbar became quite frequent after 1834,²

¹Punjab Government Record Office Monograph, No. 17, p. 192.

and the emissaries of Nepal which previously were hardly
given any royal audience were now received with great
honours. General Matabar Singh, the finest Gurkha
soldier, who entered Punjab in 1838, was soon given
a high command in the Lahore service and efforts to
enlist the Gurkha troops by the Sikhs were stepped up.
After Aanjit Singh’s demise, Nau-Nihal Singh, the de
facto ruler of the Punjab, and the Dogra brothers became
very keen to forge an anti-British league with the
Gurkhas, which was intended to serve as the keystone
of the projected coalition of the Indian powers against
the English. 1

Ever since the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-16,
the Kathmandu Durbar had become a cockpit of intrigues
against the English. But in the late thirties, anti-
British feelings in Nepal rose to new heights and
relations between the two powers were strained almost
to the breaking point. 2 Nepal, then ruled by the Kala
Pande Ministry, which was implacably hostile to the
British, 3 was spinning a web of intrigues with almost

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1 I.3. Bannerjee "Nao Nihal Singh and the
Nepalese Mission to Lahore," Proceedings of the Indian
Historical Records Commission, X XII (October 1845),
pp. 17 et seq; H. K. Gupta, "Sikh-Nepal Relations",
Ibid., XXXII (February 1954), pp. 52 et seq; Ganda
Singh (Ed.), The Punjab in 1839-40, pp. 172 et passim.

2 In 1838, Bhim Sen Thapa, the Prime Minister
of Nepal warned B.H. Hodgson, the British Resident in
Nepal, that the Durbar were preparing "for hostilities
in October should it be found that the accounts from
Ava, Pekin and Lahore were favourable". F. Tuker,
Gurkha — the story of the Gurkhas of Nepal

3 The Kala Pande, with Ranjang Pande as their
chief was the ruling party. They had come into power
after an eclipse of about thirty years and were now
assisted by the senior Jami or Queen. For the internal
affairs in Nepal and its political relations with the
British Government from 1835 to 1839, see Report of
J.R. Tickell, Assistant Resident, F.D., S.C., 16 January
1841, No. 74.
all states in India in the fond hope of setting up a confederacy of anti-British powers. Political missions were even despatched to Burma, Kabul, Herat and Tehran. In 1840, the Kal Pandes made every effort to raise the war potential of the country and even attempted to kill the British Resident at Kathmandu. The British were aware of all these activities and for many years had watched them with apprehension. At last in 1840, they decided to take military action against Nepal, but because of their involvement in wars with China and Afghanistan this could not be done, though as a precautionary measure a corps of observers consisting of some companies of cavalry, infantry and artillery were despatched to the frontier. Realising

1 F.D.S.C., 18 January 1841, No. 74.
2 For the political relations of Nepal with the Company in 1840, see Report of Lt. C.H. Nicholetts, Assistant Resident, F.D.S.C., 11 November 1853, No. 23.
3 New foundaries for manufacturing the sinews of war were founded, large quantities of ammunition were rushed to the frontier, and a census of Nepalese military power was taken, showing that the country had available the preposterous number of 400,000 trained men. In order to provide funds for an invasion of India, new taxes were imposed and salary of the soldiers was slashed. (Ibid., see also, Tuker, op. cit., pp. 105-06).
4 Hodgson wrote to his father: "Yet all is unsettled, and my ambition is bounded just now to keeping things any how together until the return of the season of action in November, when I sadly fear, it will be indispensable to inflict the long-merited and long-provoked punishment". Quoted in W.W. Hunter, Life of Brian Haughton Hodgson (London, 1896), p. 89.
that the Pande Ministry was at the root of all troubles, in November 1840, the British successfully prevailed upon the Nepalese King to turn the Kala Pandes out of office and set up a new Ministry.\(^1\) Although the new Ministers leaned heavily upon the British Resident, B.K. Hodgson, "its architect, buttress and galvaniser",\(^2\) yet anti-British feelings continued to prevail in the Kathmandu Durbar.\(^3\) It was under these circumstances that the King of Nepal heard of the Dogra conquest of Western Tibet. He became extremely anxious to extract some gain out of this Himalayan situation. His restiveness greatly increased when he was approached for military assistance by the Ladakhis.

The Tibeto-Dogra hostilities once again revived Ladakh's hope of emancipation from Dogra rule. The Ladakhis had already made repeated requests to the British for substantial aid against the Dogras, but all these supplications had gone abegging.\(^4\) Now they tried to get help from Lhasa and Kathmandu. A mission of six men under the guise of conveying the ashes of

\(^1\)This Ministry headed by Fateh Jang Chautriya, a royal collateral, was very well-disposed towards the British Government. The other chief of Nepal called it the "British Ministry", T. Smith, *Narrative of Five Years Residence at Nepal, 1841 to 1845*, (London, 1852), II, p. 97.


\(^3\)F.B.E.C., 11 November 1853, No. 23; see also, J. F. Wheeler, *Diary of Events in Nepal* (1841-1846), (Simla, 1878), pp. 4-14.

the deceased Ladakhi prince set out for Lhasa. In March 1841, two members of this mission arrived at Jumia, the north-western district of Nepal contiguous to West Tibet. They were closely questioned by the Nepalese Governor, so as to ascertain that the mission was not just a ruse of the British to gauge the reactions of the Kathmandu Durbar to the Himalayan conflagration. The envoys on reaching the Gurkha capital made "a pitious statement of Sikh oppression" and offered to place Ladakh in the hands of the Nepalese King as a dependency of Nepal in lieu of his military help against the invaders. This appeal "flattened the vanity" of the Nepalese King, and he now thought that the time had come to fish out of the troubled waters of Western Himalayan politics. The Ladakhi mission was not given any assurance and was detained at Kathmandu; the Nepalese King was wary, he first thought it prudent to know the reactions of Lhasa to such an appeal from Ladakh.

The King looked at the war as a god-send to avenge the wrongs done to Nepal by the British in the

1 Clerk to Hodgson, 29 June 1841: F.D.S.C., 2 August 1841, No. 122.
2 These two persons were Meepham Namdole and Soonam Paljore; the former was the 'Guru Lama' and the latter the 'Comptroller of the household' of Chog Sprul, the deceased Ladakhi prince, who for some time stayed at Kotgarh and was a pensionary of the British. (Tapp to Hodgson, 21 May 1841: F.D.S.C., 21 June 1841, No. 68).
3 Hodgson to Lushington, 2 April 1841: F.D.S.C., 12 April 1841, No. 144.
4 Ibid., Same to same, 26 March 1841: F.D.S.C., 5 April 1841, No. 112.
5 Hodgson to Clerk, 26 March 1841: F.D.S.C., 5 April 1841, No. 110.
6 Hodgson to Maddock, 5 July 1841: F.D.S.C., 19 July 1841, No. 27.
Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-1816. The Nepalese request to get back Simla from the Company having been met with a refusal, they now decided to get back Kumaon by force. Moreover, if the Kathmandu Durbar could establish a territorial link with the Lahore Durbar on the other side of the Himalayas, it meant breaking that political isolation of Nepal from other Indian states which had been a cardinal objective of British policy. The King became very much agitated and was extremely anxious to seize the opportunity as a means of grinding his own political axe. He summoned the Minister Choutariya Fateh Jang Shah, his brother, Guru Prasad Shah, Dalbhanjan Pande, Kaji Kaloo Shahi, Ranganath Pandit and Randal Pande, the principal nobles, with a view to rallying their support to his scheme of making a simultaneous attack on Tibet from Jumla, and securing by a coup de main a neighbouring gold mine. After the occupation of the mine it could be "easily held by compromise or bargain with either the Sikhs or Tibetans as the price of military aid to one or the other in their present struggle." But the councillors were against such a furtive attack on Tibet, which had given no offence to Nepal; moreover matters relating to the British were still in an unsettled state. The King felt chagrined over the discouraging disposition of his councillors, whom he hated as stooges of the British

1 Cf. B. L. Sanwal, Nepal And The East India Company (Bombay, 1965), pp. 252-53.
2 Hodgson to Maddock, 31 July 1841: F.D.S.C., 16 August 1841, No. 42; F.D.P.C., 11 November 1853, No. 23.
3 Ibid.
Resident. Nevertheless, to join hands with the Dogras, the King now instructed Hastbeer Khawas, the Governor of Jumla, "to hasten in person or by a trusty deputy to Zorawar Singh" and to convey to the latter the King's readiness to aid him in his ambitious projects in Western Tibet.

For a time all went well with the Dogras and the Gurkhas and there was a frequent exchange of missions between Zorawar Singh and Hastbeer Khawas. It seemed as if the long-cherished Sikh-Dogra-Gurkha dream of combining in an anti-British alliance was about to be fulfilled. But, there appeared one snag: the Dogras demanded that some of the Hunias, who had fled from Western Tibet and were residing in Jumla were to all intents and purposes their subjects, and hence they (Hunias) should pay all taxes to the Dogras— the de facto rulers of Western Tibet. If that was allowed "then everything will go on with entire goodwill and amity between us". The King found it a hard bargain and Hastbeer did not accede to this demand of the Dogras. While steps were taken to iron out this difficulty, twelve hundred Gurkha soldiers were rushed

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1 Hastbeer was appointed as the Governor of Jumla when the Kala Pandes Ministry was in power; he was in special confidence of the palace and was not responsible to the new pro-British Chautriya Ministry. (F.D.S.C., 16 August 1841, No. 43; F.D.S.C., 4 October 1841, No. 40).

2 Resident to Government, 19 September 1841: F.D.S.C., 4 October 1841, No. 40.

3 F.D.S.C., 4 October 1841, No. 37; F.D.S.C., 8 November 1841, No. 41; F.D., Sec. Progs., 29 November 1841, No. 28.

4 Lushing ton to Thomason, 20 September 1841: F.D.S.C., 11 October 1841, No. 46.

5 Ibid.
Thus the Dogras, after establishing themselves quite close to the frontier of Nepal were gravitating towards an alliance with the Kathmandu Durbar. The concern, and apprehension, of the British increased commensurate with the approach of the Dogras to the Nepalese kingdom. Clerk wrote that there would be a degree of insecurity to British interests in the connection of Nepal to any Hill State to the west of it, and that insecurity would, I conceive be imminent in an union of the abundant resources of the Jummoo Rajas with the malevolence and bravery of the Gurkhas Army.

T.C. Robertson, the Lieutenant-Governor of North-West province, also reported that the Nepalese, who longed to get back Kumaon, were willing to cooperate with the Dogras. Robertson's conclusion was that the Sikh "occupation of Mandi, invasion of Kooloo, and demonstration against Bashahr" were all parts of a plan to reach the Nepal frontier. In a spirited note Robertson, cautioned his Government that if Lahore-Kathmandu axis were allowed to acquire strength and consistency, I cannot but think that the tranquillity and prosperity of Kumaon will be thereby grievously and durably affected.

1 F.D.S.C., 11 October 1841, No. 46; F.D.S.C., 6 December 1841, No. 59.
2 Clerk to Maddock, 4 September 1841: F.D.S.C., 20 September 1841, No. 65.
3 Cf. Minute of Lieutenant-Governor of N.W. Province, 28 September 1841: F.D.S.C., 11 October 1841, No. 50.
4 Ibid.
But to the English a fact of yet more serious concern was the fear of Chinese intervention in this war. After all Tibet was a Chinese protectorate and such a possibility was not ruled out. The British at that time were fighting with China and were afraid that the Chinese may regard the Dogra attack on Tibet as English-inspired and emanating from the same impulse which had brought the 'barbarian ships' on their eastern frontier. Clerk was of the opinion that the hostile position towards tributaries of the Chinese Government, in which the Sikhs are now exhibited, might prove embarrassing under such circumstances as an approaching pacification at Pekin; for that Government will, of course, in the present state of affairs there, impute the invasion of its territories by the Sikhs, to the instigation of the British Government.

Under these circumstances, the Chinese might be tempted to create a diversionary attack on India to weaken the British effort in China itself, or they may instigate Nepal—their tributary—to make a sudden thrust into British territories. Nepal was already willing to do such a service to Peking. During the past few years, the King of Nepal had sent many missions to lhasa and Peking professing his extreme eagerness to throw off his "allegiance" to the British and to "resume the old career of his ancestors" by strengthening Nepal's bond with the Celestial Empire. When the Ladakhi envoys

1The Friend of India (Calcutta), 11 November, 1841.
2F.D.S.C., 20 September 1841, No. 65.
4F.D.S.C., 18 January 1841, No. 74; F.D.P.C., 11 November 1853, No. 23.
approached Kathmandu for help, the Nepalese Durbar, as noted earlier, referred the appeal to Lhasa and secretly instructed its Vakil to inform the Chinese Amban there, of the Durbar's readiness to put troops into motion in that direction, provided the Chinese Government could be induced to sanction the measure. In reply, the Chinese Amban stated that

the Chinese Government has no title or purpose to interfere with the Ladakh politics, and that the Durbar would do well to confine itself to its established circle of connection, cherishing peace and good faith within that circle, and less heedful of novelties beyond it.

Thus, though both Tibet and China distrusted the war-like Nepalese and though Nepal's repeated entreaties to Lhasa and Peking failed to bear any fruit, the British were greatly alarmed. Hodgson, who had already cautioned his government, now in a note ringing with anxiety observed that unless the British prevailed upon the Lahore Durbar to restrain the unbridled ambition of the Jammu brothers,

with Chinese, Sikhs and Gurkhas, we shall ere long find ourselves, of necessity, involved in a labyrinth of trans-Himalayan politics, the clue to which may be difficult to find and unprofitable to use when found.

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2In July, 1841, Hodgson wrote that "if it be not the desire of government that the attention of China should be just now needlessly drawn to this quarter, the sooner these wanton encroachments of the Jammu family upon the states or districts contiguous to Ladakh are discountenanced the better" (Hodgson to Maddock, 30 July 1841: F.D.S.C., 16 August 1841, No. 41).

3Hodgson to Government, 2 October 1841: F.D.S.C., 11 October 1841, No. 89.
Hitherto, the British had watched all these developments with close attention and considerable disquiet. But the threat posed by a possible arrival of the Chinese forces on the Indian frontier added to the fear of Dogra-Nepalese rapprochement took on nightmarish proportions in British minds. Now, they were convinced that in order to restrain the Dogras some sterner measures will have to be taken. But the British were not in a position to take any military action, for they were deeply involved in the Opium War and the Afghan War, where most of their armed forces were committed. Under these circumstances, only diplomatic pressure could be exerted on the Lahore Durbar. The Friend of India wrote:

There is nothing but the Wand of Popilius - an order from the Council Chamber in Calcutta - which can prevent their (Dogras) moving on and conquering Lassa itself.

Lord Auckland, the Governor-General, at last decided to act. As has been noted earlier, a deadline was set within which the Sikh Maharaja was asked to secure the withdrawal of the Dogras back to their previous positions in Ladakh. The Lahore ruler agreed, but before the order could reach Zorawar, he was overwhelmed by a large Tibetan army; soon the Dogras were defeated and most of them including Zorawar Singh were killed. The English fear of Chinese military action on the Indian frontier of the Himalayas vanished with the Dogra debacle.

The King of Nepal was also following the trend of events with great interest. The Nepalese agent at Jhoolaghat kept the Durbar posted with the latest events.

1 The Friend of India (Calcutta), 11 November 1841.
developments. After the defeat of the Dogras, the Nepalese proffered help to the Tibetans in expelling the invaders from Western Tibet, and the offer was repeated many times. But the Tibetans, aware as they were of the opportunistic tactics of the Nepalese King, refused these overtures. The hope of Nepal to exploit the Western Himalayan conflagration dimmed with the disastrous defeat of the Dogras. Her restlessness also died down with the termination of hostilities and conclusion of peace.

The Western Himalayan crisis did not assume greater complexity due partly to the effective restraint of Nepal by both the British and Chinese diplomacy. The war convinced the British that restraint on Nepal was essential to the preservation of peace in the northern frontier of India. It further underscored the fact that a major political event in the Himalayan region was certain to be far-reaching in its effects; the whole region might be aflame. Since China had political and commercial interests in the area, a major event was most likely to entail her intervention. Any such interference was bound to affect adversely the British commercial interests not only with Western Tibet but with China also. Hence the British not only exerted diplomatic pressure on the Lahore Durbar to secure the withdrawal of the Dogras but even determined to take active military measures.

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1 F.D.S.C., 20 December 1841, No. 35.
2 Cunningham to Clerk, 12 February 1842: F.D.S.C., 30 March 1842, No. 102; F.D.S.C., 14 September 1842, No. 51; F.D.S.C., 9 November 1842, No. 61.
3 Ibid.
The Tibeto-Dogra hostilities also shed some light on the fundamental principles of Chinese policy in the Himalayan area. Peking's basic objectives were to maintain the status quo in Western Tibet, and to avoid interference beyond its borders; Ladakh was clearly beyond the Chinese sphere of influence. In this context, Hodgson wrote:

Over Ladakh the Chinese Viceroy at Lassa has himself just declared (what indeed was priorly known), that he neither claims nor desires any sort of authority.

Although Zorawar Singh's invasion of Western Tibet did not result in any of the unpleasant possibilities which for a time worried the British Government, yet it is not without political significance. It led to a closer acquaintance of the English with the Western Himalayas. Lieutenant Cunningham who was sent to the frontier on a political mission, during his stay of a year there, inter alia, submitted detailed reports to his Government dealing with the complex and anomalous interrelationship of Himalayan states, their ignorance about the laws of war, and their trade and commerce. These aspects of Cunningham's despatches may be briefly touched upon here.

When Cunningham reached Kinnaur in October 1841, the King of Bashahr complained to him that for about the last sixty years, he had been receiving a tribute of thirty 'Punkhees' or pieces of woollen cloth from Peri, a village in the Manning Pargannah - a sub-division of Spiti under Ladakh. But, for the year under review,

1Hodgson to Erskine, 4 August 1841: F.D.S.C., 23 August 1841, No. 65.
2Cunningham to Clerk, 21 October 1841: F.D.S.C., 22 November 1841, No. 23.
the King feared that due to Zorawar’s orders these ‘Punkhees’ were not given to him. Cunningham on further enquiries found that these ‘Punkhees’ were really due to the Bashahr Raja, and were paid through the Ladakahi functionaries who resided at Manning. However, he was surprised to find the Raja of Bashahr (under British protection) collecting some pieces of cloth as tribute from a village of Ladakh, which was under Sikh paramountcy. Similar was the case of village Gheo, “situated at a good day’s journey” to the north-west of Churit in West Tibet. From this village the Bashahr Raja received annually a trifling amount of rupees seven and a half, and for the year 1841 this sum too remained unpaid. Yet another anomaly which Cunningham noticed in this connection was that the King of Bashahr, a British tributary, used to send presents to the Governor of Gartok once in every three years. The Raja was afraid that if he did not send the same, his subjects would incur the displeasure of the Chinese, and consequently their trade would suffer. It was also observed that when a new Raja of Bashahr took the Gaddi, he received

1 Cunningham to Clerk, 8 November 1841: F.D.S.C., 20 December 1841, No. 40.
2 Ibid.
3 Cunningham to Clerk, 3 August 1842: F.D.S.C., 7 September 1842, No. 28. It may be noticed that at about this very time, G.F. Lushington, the Commissioner of Kumaon, also reported to the Government that under the “Tibet rule” Garpon of Taklakot, a Tibetan functionary, annually appointed one of his representatives to go to Byans villages (a sub-division of Kumaon under British control) to collect “payment established between the parties as the price of privilege of trade. This payment being made, our Bhotias hereafter obtained permission to proceed to Taklakot where some other dues were levied on them” (Lushington to Edwards, 9 October 1841: F.D.S.C., 1 November 1841, No. 36).
presents from the Governor of Gartok. Cunningham further observed that the Raja of Sikkim, who was a British feudatory, "appears to send presents" to the Grand Lama. "I apprehend", the British Commissioner recorded, "that all the Grand Lamas or Incarnations admit the supremacy of Lassa in temporal affairs, and these presents of the Sikkim Raja may be equally liable to misconstruction with others." Thus, all this was a complex situation where "multiplicity of relations" and "divisions of allegiance" existed. In Western political parlance, it was not clear as to who was the paramount power, who was the sovereign of whom? Cunningham informed his Government that time had come to remodel the relations of the hill states under British protection with the border states under Chinese rule, He observed:

The consolidated empires of England and China have met one another along the Himalayan mountains and it is time that the doubts should be at an end. It is not for us to share with others the allegiance of petty princes nor should we desire that our dependents should have claims upon the territories of foreign states. Our feudatories should have no political connection with strangers although we may allow them to inter-change friendly letters and even visits with their neighbours under the rule of others. The presence of Chinese collector in our territory ... is I think extremely objectionable and our traders should only pay the usual customs duties at the usual places of collection beyond our own boundary.

1 F.D.S.C., 7 September 1842, No. 28.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
Another matter which Cunningham commented upon and acquainted his Government with was the ignorance of the Himalayan states about the laws of war, and behaviour of the belligerents towards the neutrals. After the defeat and death of Zorawar Singh, when the Tibetan army swooped down upon Ladakh and besieged Leh, one Ladakhi and his wife, fled from their country and took refuge in Kinnaur. The Gomzud (Tibetan local authority) of Tashigong asked Cunningham to surrender these persons to the Tibetan authorities of the neighbouring post of Churit, as they were Tibetan subjects. Cunningham refused to surrender them, because they had taken shelter in a state which was neutral. But his reply irritated Kalon Surkhang, the Tibetan Commander, who wrote to Cunningham that if not at present, at least after the cessation of hostilities, these persons should be surrendered, otherwise it may cause differences between the two Governments. Cunningham, while pointing out this ignorance of the "half barbarous Asiatics" about the laws of war and principles of international law observed that "domineering tone" of the Surkhang's letter further affords an additional reason for modifying the relationship of our subordinate principalities with Lassa and for coming to an explicit understanding with the Peking Commissioner about these relations and about some of the more obvious points of international law.

1 F.D. Sec. Progs., 7 September 1842, No. 23.
2 Zoorkang (Surkhang) to Cunningham, 10 August 1842: F.D.S.C., 26 October 1842, No. 91.
3 Cunningham to Clerk, 20 August 1842: F.D.S.C., 26 October 1842, No. 96.
Cunningham also submitted detailed reports on the import and export trade of Bashahr. Rampur in Bashahr was quite a busy trade mart, where fairs were held every year. In the first half of the nineteenth century, when the inhabitants of Kashmir, due to oppression of the Afghans and the Sikhs, left that valley and settled in the Indian plains, these fairs became quite important. 1 Now the traders from Ladakh, West Tibet, Kumaon, Bashahr and the Indian plains visited these fairs, and exchanged their commodities. 2 Churraus or opium, till the then recent prohibitive regulations of the Chinese Government was an important item of export to Yarkand. 3 But the most important and lucrative item of trade was shawl wool, which was brought to Rampur from Rudok and other districts of Western Tibet. 4 Cunningham diligently collected the statistics of imports and exports of Bashahr during the years 1837 to 1841, and pointed out that if the British wished to improve the trade of their hill states with Western Tibet, "a road should be carried from the tableland of Tibet to the plains of India, and the transport of merchandise be simplified and rendered secure." Such a measure, Cunningham suggested, would

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1Cunningham to Clerk, 22 October 1841: F.D.S.C., 22 November 1841, No. 25.
2The principal articles of import from Western Tibet into Bashahr were: shawl wool, sheep, woollens, sheep wool, borax and salt. In addition many other articles of luxury or use or curiosity such as chowries, felts, silks, tea, leather, sulphur, musk, chinaware, coral, amber etc. were also imported. Of exports to Tibet, mules, wooden cups, cotton piece goods, grain, dried fruits, brass pots and spices were the main; besides, a considerable quantity of indigo, horse-shoes, broad-cloth, sugar, tabacco and medicinal seeds were carried to Ladakh or to the Garo fair. (Cunningham to Clerk, 13 November 1841: F.D.S.C., 13 December 1841, No. 42).
3Ibid.
4F.D.S.C., 22 November 1841, No. 25.
induce the merchants of Delhi and Amritsar to come forward with their large means and to embark in the trade of the Chinese provinces, and to secure among other advantages the continued manufacture of shawls in the plains.  

Cunningham's suggestions and recommendations greatly influenced the future course of British Himalayan policy. As will be noticed, his doctrine that British feudatories should not be allowed to pay any kind of tribute except religious in nature to any other power, was first put into effect in the case of Spiti in 1846. This very principle governed the settlement regarding Burma in 1886 and of Sikkim in 1890, and led the Indian Government to examine with interest and some anxiety the tributary status of Nepal to the Chinese Empire.  

In consonance with Cunningham's other suggestions, transit duties in Bashahr were abolished in 1847, and the work of constructing a road — later known as the Hindustan-Tibet Road — linking the Indian plains with Western Tibet via Simla and Chini was taken up in the eighteen-fifties.

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1 F.B.S.C., 13 December 1841, No. 42.  
2 See infra p. 259.  
3 Cf. Lamb, Britain And Chinese Central Asia, p. 80.  