

CAN RUSSIA INVADE INDIA?

INDIAN PROBLEMS

NO. I

Can Russia invade India?

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'Afghanistan merits the character given to Spain by the first Henry of France : Invade with a large force, and you are destroyed by starvation ; invade with a small one, and you are overwhelmed by a hostile people.'

Sir Henry Durand

Westminster

ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE AND CO.

14 PARLIAMENT STREET, S.W.

1895

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P R E F A C E

SOME idea that a Russian Invasion of India, on a scale adequate to success, was an impossible thing, dawned upon me when, serving on the army staff in the Afghan War of 1878-79-80, I was brought face to face with the difficulties attendant on moving and feeding a few thousand men in the desert of Beluchistan and the Afghan mountains; but it was not till I began to write a history of that war, that the confirmatory testimony borne to the views which I had begun to entertain, by the wider information gained from the materials placed at my disposal by the kindness of the Government of India, on the one hand,

and by that of private friends, on the other, gave to them first clearness and precision, and then such strength and conviction that I felt compelled to lay aside, for a time, the larger work in which, in due course, they would have appeared, in order to combat, at once and directly, the error which, so long as it keeps its hold on the public mind, must prove a perennial source of danger, trouble, and loss to Great Britain's Indian Empire.

If I can succeed in convincing my countrymen that the fear of Russia, with which they have been so carefully inoculated, is groundless, the hands of the British and Indian Governments will be strengthened to resist the ignorant politicians and ambitious soldiers who are constantly trying to drive them into wild adventures, which will, as they well know,