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BRITISH INTERVENTION IN THE TAIPING REBELLION

1860  1864

by

IRVING ANTIN

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PREFACE
PREFACE

That which follows owes its raison d'être to the overwhelming confusion extant concerning the British role in the suppression of the Taiping Rebellion. From a number of colorful but careless histories of this epoch it has been necessary to turn to certain authoritative papers. When the official and printed documents of the Foreign Office are carefully examined, a considerably unconventional narrative emerges.

Any seasoned historical narrative must necessarily selectively sample many widely divergent sources. While the British parliamentary papers represent but one official source, they, nevertheless, include enormous quantities of varying materials. The procedure here, which has been to draw heavily upon such documentary evidence, may, perhaps, be justified by the fact that this study is primarily pre-occupied with official British China policy, in London and in China.
CHAPTER I

Introduction
In the summer of 1850, in an obscure village near Kueip'ing, Kwangsi, a small band of Chinese peasants raised the banner of revolt against the long decadent Manchu dynasty. Hung Hsiu-Ch'üan, spiritus rector of the Taiping rebels, headed a movement compounded of a curious admixture of antidynastic fervor, agrarian discontent and a pseudo-Christianity. The Taiping Rebellion lasted for fifteen years, cost the lives of 20,000,000 men, women and children, and very nearly concluded the Ch'ing dynastic reign.

In September 1851, after a year of indecisive campaigns and skirmishes against the government's troops, the insurgents established themselves as the "Celestial Kingdom of Peace" with Hung as the T'ien-wang, or "Celestial King." From 1851 to 1853 the rebels advanced steadily northward, partly because of military successes, but not infrequently they were forced to flee the government troops. On January 12, 1853, the Taipings captured Wuchang, one of the three great Wuhan cities on the Yangtze river. Nanking fell to the rebels shortly after (March 19th) and here the insurgents established a permanent capital. In the same year (1853) a
separate rebel movement, the Triads captured Shanghai which they held until February 17, 1855, when foreign troops, principally French, and internal disintegration in the Triad ranks combined to force their evacuation of the city. The Triads and Taipings, however, after several uneasy alliances, never actually amalgamated. In fact, the Taipings failed to absorb any of the contemporary anti-dynastic movements.

The same year that the Triads evacuated Shanghai (1855), the Taipings for all practical purposes, abandoned any attempts to continue their northward march to Peking. The rebels attempted some westward campaigns but mainly their activity stemmed from Nanking towards control of the surrounding countryside. Especially did they exert a vigorous stranglehold on the Yangtze river valley -- the rich silk and tea-producing country, upon which the foreigners' commercial economy at Shanghai depended. In late 1858 the Taipings broke a siege at Nanking, which forces loyal to Peking had imposed. The same year witnessed the signing of a number of European treaties with the Chinese Imperialist government. None of these treaties were completely satisfactory and in 1860, a number of British and French troops invaded and seized control of the Tientsin country. The Peking court fled to Jehol (Sept. 22). But on October 13, Peking surrendered to the Allies (Great Britain and France). There followed a series of treaties imposed upon the impotent
Manchu delegates. From October 24th to November 14th the foreign powers succeeded in gaining a number of exclusive privileges from the so-called Chinese government, which sealed for a nearly a century the fate of Chinese sovereignty. It is understandable, then, that after the Powers were satisfied with their final security in China with the Peking regime, that they might then release their forces for policing local trouble areas, e.g., Shanghai. In fact even before Peking had been thoroughly humiliated, foreign resistance had already stiffened in Shanghai. On August 13, 1860 a comparatively small allied force repulsed a series of Taiping attacks at the port city.

Although France and Russia as powerful nations, and Americans as adventurers played important roles in the foreign activity against the Taipings, by far, the most dominant role was played by the British in China. This account delves immediately into a discussion of policies and patterns of British intervention against the Taipings (1860-1864). It is hoped to reveal motivations as well as the actual pattern of aid, if there was such, to the Imperialist cause. Consequently, the narrative begins after the Peking settlement.

After the Treaty settlements at Peking it seems quite clear that the Europeans, among whom the British apparently played the dominant role, had little to gain from continuing a watchful policy of doubtful neutrality. Indeed, as one
writer has said, "the fate of the rebellion was sealed when Lord Elgin and Baron Gros concluded their negotiations with Prince Kung in 1860. Great Britain had decided that it was better policy to support and strengthen the dynasty than to permit the Empire to fall to pieces in rebellion." The Earl of Elgin's instructions had alluded to China's civil war as a detriment to trade:

"If the political state of China were not at the present time subject to all the derangement incidental to a civil war, it would be desirable that your Excellency should include the important city of Nankin by name, as one of the places to which British merchants should have access."  

Nanking, of course, remained in rebel hands; its trade was, thus, inaccessible, at least until Imperialist authority reestablished itself, since trade with the insurgents seemed quite remote. The Treaty of Tientsin (June 26, 1858) and the succeeding Peking arrangements improved commercial relations with the Manchu regime to such an extent, that the Taipings degenerated to the status of a nuisance on the Yangtze. While formerly, it may have served the commercial purposes of the Westerners to condone rebellions, regionalism in the Chinese administrative polity, and a generally impotent

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1Tyler Dennett, Americans in Eastern Asia, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1922), 369.

2Clarendon to Elgin, No. 2, p. 4, "Correspondence Relative to the Earl of Elgin's Special Missions to China and Japan 1857-1859."
Imperial control, it now became apparent that the best interests of trade could be served only by a strong government at Peking. Several important clauses of the Treaty of Tientsin are quoted below, which indicate best, the motivations for the new European-Manchu rapprochement:

"Art. IX. - British subjects are hereby authorized to travel, for pleasure or for purposes of trade, to all parts of the interior, under passports which will be issued by their Consuls, and countersigned by the local authorities. These passports, if demanded, must be produced for examination in the localities passed through. If the passport be not irregular, the bearer will be allowed to proceed, and no opposition shall be offered to his hiring persons or hiring vessels for the carriage of his baggage or merchandise. If he be without a passport or if he commit any offence against the law, he shall be handed over to the nearest Consul for punishment, but he must not be subjected to any ill-usage in excess of necessary restraint. No passport need be applied for by persons going on excursions from the ports open to trade to a distance not exceeding 100 li, and for a period not exceeding five days. --- To Nanking, and other cities disturbed by persons in arms against the Government, no pass shall be given until they shall have been recaptured.

"Art.X. - British merchant-ships shall have authority to trade upon the Great River (Yangtze). The Upper and Lower Valley of the river being, however, disturbed by outlaws, no port shall be, for the present, opened to trade, with the exception of Chinkiang, which shall be opened in a year from the date of the signing of this Treaty.

"So soon as peace shall have been restored, British vessels shall also be admitted to trade at such ports as far as
Hankow, not exceeding three in number as the British Minister, after consultation with the Chinese Secretary of State, may determine shall be ports of entry and discharge."

"Art. XI. - The Christian religion, as professed by Protestants or Roman Catholics, inculcates the practice of virtue, and teaches man to do as he would be done by. Persons teaching it or professing it therefore, shall alike be entitled to the protection of the Chinese authorities; nor shall any such, peaceably pursuing their calling, and not offending against the laws, be persecuted or interfered with."

Art. XII. - It is agreed, that henceforward the character "I" (Barbarian) shall not be applied to the Government or subjects of Her Britannic Majesty, in any Chinese official document issued by the Chinese authorities either in the capital or in the provinces." 3

Thus Lord Elgin was able to view the rebellion as a temporary condition which "in the interval interfered with the due carrying into execution of the terms of his treaty." 4 This may make clearer his arrogant attitude towards the Taiping forts at Nanking, 5 during an inspection tour up the Yantze.

There were other factors not favoring the Taipings


5Note:- Elgin seems to have ignored the rebel guns completely. No attempt was made to warn them of the approach of British vessels of war nor to issue conventional signals. The insurgents naturally felt that the British excursion up the Yantze was a punitive one, to be followed by an Imperialist
which, though in some respects equally applicable to their Imperialist adversaries, could now be held up as a threat to the European trade, lives, religion, and to "the existence of the educated wealthy and trading classes" of China.

For example, the Taiping were noted for their lack of supporting military and economic hinterlands. They were a loosely connected band of marauders, holding only a few cities and towns in the Yangtze country (by 1860). Without a military commissariat, their armies quite naturally took to the country for requisitions and supplies, for which the peasant was paid very little. For actual arms and military supplies they depended on their principal and perhaps only

armada. Consequently the Taipings opened fire, which seems to have served as a convenient *casus belli* for the British return-fire.

For further details, see the account in British P.P. and L. Oliphant, Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's Mission to China and Japan in the years 1857, 1858, 1859, 2 vols., (Edinburgh and London: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1861).

6Bruce to Russel, June 23, 1861 [29767], 51-52.

7This is hotly contested by Lindley, who describes the Taipings as having a well-organized administrative system. Lindley's is a minority opinion, however. While most authorities present the view presented here, it must be conceded that the information is far from complete. Indeed, the Manchus could hardly claim an efficient administrative polity, but they had historical traditions.

arms manufactory at Kunshan. More likely, they depended on the renegade traders in the port cities who sold them Enfield rifles or again, captured stocks from defeated Imperialist forces. But at no time were they plentifully supplied. In fact, much of the success of the Foreigners' adventurist armies derived from superiority in fire-power, both as of rifles and small cannon and artillery.

There was yet another most important factor in the disintegration of the Tai-P'ing Tien Kuo (for such it was in the late 1850's). The insurgents had lost their hold on the populace. Originally they had drawn heavily upon the disgruntled peasantry of Kwangsi, Kwangtung and the other southern provinces. To their banners there flocked the excess rural youth, the "floating population" which found itself disincorporated from a rapidly and already diminished agricultural base. With them had come the impoverished peasants and their families, unable longer to bear the exorbitant land

They (... i.e., the Tai-P'ings) had no arsenals, and were forced to manufacture such weapons as they could by the most primitive means, though in the early days of the revolt they were able to buy some equipment from the foreigners. Fabulous prices were paid, and examples are cited of English merchants buying old guns at two or three dollars apiece and selling them to the Tai-P'ings for twenty-five to thirty dollars and more." -- Veninkov, Contemporary China, n.p., cited in Victor A. Yakhontoff, The Chinese Soviets (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1934), 29.

taxes, frequently extorted from future years by the corrupt officialdom. (Since it is not within the scope of this account, we shall refer in passing, only, to the corruption of the Manchu body politic with its concomitant demoralization of the Chinese literati).

The rebels themselves gave indications, early, of disintegration in the composition of their personnel. Thus, the cadres from the southern provinces, even in 1854 were becoming increasingly scarce as the armies of Hung Hsiu-Ch'i-an moved northward. Of 155,800 men and women in the rebel forces at Nanking in that year only 4,000 were from the original provinces of Kwangsi and Kwangtung. Most of the officers came from the provinces; they rode on horses alongside their bedraggled men. Numerous dialects were spoken and in general the troops were of the "worst of Chinese rabble."

The Tai-P'ings must not be isolated from the fabric of Chinese history. They were quite definitely a part of the historical backdrop of revolution, violence, chaotic living conditions, and all modes of political discontent and petty banditry. Indeed, they were frequently confused with other rebel groups, for example, the Triads, a prominent secret society. Not rarely were they referred to as brethren of the


11 Brine, 223.
Shantung banditti. Thus, the insurgents must be placed in their proper perspective. They were part and parcel of an age of lawlessness and anarchy. It was a period of politico-administrative vacuum. In the face of this, it became difficult for the European trader to deal with the local populace as he had formerly. Political anarchy made for economic disruption, finance-currency chaos, followed by the flight of the native Chinese bourgeoisie from the Taiping strongholds. This Chinese merchant class had developed about the city ports and centers of western commerce. They had made their adjustments to the Foreigners' economy. They were now part of the flourishing China export-import trade. They were as appalled at the rebel attitudes towards commerce as were the Europeans and Americans. They viewed with distaste the professed politico-religious prohibitions of the Taiping upon trade, commerce and industry. The rebels ejected all inhabitants of a city who could not perform labor and service duties; few shops and little trade were encouraged. If they did not always strictly prohibit foreign traders, in actuality, so many restrictions were placed on the native Chinese merchants, that these latter fled the rebel country like a plague. Theoretically, Hung's planners conceived of a basically rural Chinese society, with a system of public

12Bruce to Russel, June 23, 1861 [2976], 6.
granaries and a community of goods"; there was only sporadic interest in a currency.

Meanwhile, the peasant base of the Taiping support had begun to melt away. Frequently, the peasant sympathy alienated itself to such a degree, that villagers "rose en masse during Taiping retreats to kill rebels." Of course, some of the "country people were unconcerned whether the Hien Fung [sic, Hsien-fung] emperor or the Celestial King ruled the country, so long as they were left alone." More frequently, however, first-hand observers could write, "It was commonly reported that many poor countrymen were beheaded by the imperial troops simply to gain the reward of bravery. And on the other hand many of these soldiers were cut off by the peasantry when found looting, and buried in their gardens." In the city the laboring classes suffered from general economic instability; rice is said to have sold in 1857 at five times its usual price. Thus the common people

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13 Brine, 222.


15 Brine, 250.


17 Brine, 217.
are seen to have been hit quite hard. The peasants, dependent on foreign trade, in the vicinity of the port cities suffered the disruption of the silk and tea culture economy. The native bourgeoisie was unable to carry on trade as formerly. Even the laborers were struck down by the rising cost of living. These factors, of course, held true principally for the regions near the European settlements (... viz., Shanghai, Ningpo, Hangchow, etc.). However, even the self-sufficient agricultural-handicrafts economy of the Yangtze country was affected, though, perhaps not so adversely.

For the foreigner in China, who was either a trader or missionary, and the former seemed predominant, the big question in China was trade. The merchant frequently over-emphasized the political and neglected the economic elements of the China trade. Pelcovitz has stated this most aptly:

"First, it was gospel that political rather than economic obstacles prevented realization of the potentialities of the China market. 'Illegal' li kin and other inland dues were strangling trade...reading into the Tientsin Treaty their own broad interpretation, merchants insisted that if the Treaty were properly 'enforced' their rights would include everything from abolition of internal taxes to a comprehensive privilege of trading and residing throughout the whole of China... Arguing from the decentralization of the Empire and the impotence of Peking authority in the provinces,

Old China Hands, further, called on the government to face reality and deal with the local viceroys.

"As a fourth tenet Old China Hands built up a sort of cracker barrel philosophy of the Treaty Ports on the proper way to handle 'Orientals' and 'Oriental authorities'."

Actually, it was not the difficult political situation but the fact that China's economy, basically, was self-sufficient. One might even ask as Pelcovitz has: "Was there a hidden China trade?" Oliphant has described his satisfaction "on observing, in some of the shops, well-known British stamps, proving that the manufactures of our own country were at last beginning to find their way into the Empire. (...) i.e., observed while on a trip to Hankow. We asked the price of some ladies' superfine habit cloth and found it five taels and a-half a chang, or about 6 shillings a yard." But, as final observations Lord Elgin and Oliphant could see little future in the China trade, since Chinese handicraft industries could produce cheaper than the Manchester mills. Earl Elgin cautioned "that British manufacturers will have to exert themselves to the utmost if they intend to supplant...the fabrics produced in their leisure hours...by this industrious, frugal, and sober popu-

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19Pelcovitz, 15-16.
21Ibid., V. 2, Ch. XVIII, passim.
lation. It is a pleasing but pernicious fallacy to imagine that the influence of an intriguing mandarin is to be presumed whenever a buyer shows preference for native over foreign calico."

One of the most interesting analyses on the China trade was an account presented by Mr. Mitchell, a British official at Hongkong. Although prepared in 1852 it was scarcely noted until six years later. Mitchell, after an exhaustive statistical study, concluded that British traders would never completely capture the China market, because of the self-sufficiency of the Chinese body economic. Manchester could not sell to Chinese at prices competitive to native production. The demand was conceded to exist, but not the ability to pay. It was the realization of this situation -- that the China trade was purely limited in its potentialities -- that determined London that the China trade would not ever justify the costs of a war. The mercantile interests would have pushed the British government into a position where it would have had to police the remains of the Manchu empire. This, the Foreign Office resolutely refused to do, disclaiming any intention to have China become a second India. All of this leads to Pelcovitz' contention "that for half a century there existed


\[23\] Pelcovitz, vii.
a fundamental clash between mercantile and official attitudes on British policy toward China." Pelcovitz advances one step further and contends that Britain's China policy was not molded by the powerful English commercial interests in China.

The present writer accepts the view that a dichotomy of interests existed between the Old China Hands and the Foreign Office. However, he feels that even so the Old China Hands, aided and abetted by the China naval and military personnel, were able to overstep the official bounds of Foreign Office policy, and present the British government with faits accomplis and thus place it in a position from which it could not easily withdraw. Thus, the nature of the intervention was frequently unofficial, locally-inspired, never a full-fledged military campaign in wholehearted co-operation with the Imperial government. Most significant, the Foreign Office never conceived of itself as at war with the Taipings. Rather, it looked at the China affair as a series of punitive measures against marauding bands taken in defense of the treaty ports in lieu of the authority and power of the Peking regime to do so.

Some additional points remain to be raised. The Pelcovitz thesis contends that the British China policy was not motivated from considerations of the China trade, and that

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24 Loc. cit.
the powerful firms like Jardine, Mathison & Company were never able to get the official support of the Foreign Office. Now this contention is partially valid if one accepts the policy in London as the dominant factor. Actually, and this is one of the present writer's main contentions, the Old China Hands had their own aggressive policy which constantly moved ahead of the British government, presenting it with *faits accomplis*, as will be shown here. This was possible because the distance between London and Shanghai and Peking, in terms of time and space, made for a certain degree of autonomy. So that in effect the China policy, for all practical purposes, can be still interpreted as commercially motivated.

Finally, there is grave doubt that foreign intervention was, of itself, the instrument which accomplished the defeat of the Tai P'ing Tien Kuo. Rather, the insurgent forces fell of their own weight, perhaps, for failure to give aggressive leadership with the necessary intellectual adjuncts, to China's greatest problem -- the sub-marginal subsistence peasantry. Failing to put into operation a program of agrarian reform, no amount of anti-Manchu orientation could draw sufficient and lasting support.
CHAPTER II

1860-1863, Neutrality to Quasi-Intervention
After the successful Allied repulse of the Taiping attack on Shanghai on August 21, 1860, the rebels over-ran the whole of Kiangnan [sic, Kiangsu, Anwei, and Kiangsi] excepting the region in the immediate vicinity of Shanghai. These Shanghai limits were soon broadened to encompass an area less than thirty miles in radius, which the Europeans declared a neutral zone. This was the center of foreign trade -- the entrepot of the entire Yangtze country. The insurgents ringed themselves about this great port city at Sungkiang, Tsingpu, and Kiating, each a distance of about twenty-five miles, south-west, west and north-west respectively. From these fortified positions the Taipings made frequent raids upon the surrounding countryside. Meanwhile the circle drew tighter, for in March, 1861, they looted Chenju, eight miles northwest of Shanghai. Earlier (September 8, 1860) they had captured Chapu, south of Shanghai on the southern coast of the Pouching peninsula. This was followed by an attack on Hangchow (which the rebels had in March, 1860, captured and shortly abandoned), and another

\[1\] Morse, 2:65.
attack in March 1861, both of which failed.  

Nevertheless, real success attended the insurgents on December 9, 1861 with the capture of the important port city of Ningpo. Further campaigns were reported throughout the central and southern provinces for the year 1861. However, in July, Tseng Kuo-fan driving hard on the western Yangtze country, scored a signal victory against the Taipings at Anking, after a long siege against the city. The capture of Anking, which probably sealed the fate of Nanking, reduced the T'ai P'ing T'ien Kuo to a river segment and its banks extending no more than 250 miles and of an indefinite breadth. Thus the Insurgent forces were drawn up quite taut like a rubber band, and since they were further concentrated about the environs of Nanking, they could only be expected to spill over into the Shanghai neutral zone. Their other "free" direction would seem to have been north of the Yangtze towards Peking. Here the Imperialists were in stronger concentra-
tions. Furthermore, the earlier northern expeditions had failed miserably. Indeed, there roamed other rebel bands whose "leadership" owed no allegiance to Hung Hsiao-Ch'üan.

Thus, it is at this time that rebel atrocities against innocent Chinese denizens, wholesale piracy, and looting of

\[2\] Morse, 2:65.

European trade shipments were reported with greater frequency. The English and French consuls were repeatedly besieged by complaints of the local merchants against "marauding bands of rebels who live off the land and who terrify the population by their rape and plunder." Meanwhile, the Imperialist tactics seem to have called for a drive to the sea -- the rebel forces to be pushed toward the port cities. The Manchus counted on the foreigners to defend their trading interests along the coast. The surrounding countryside appealed to the rebels since it was of the richest in China. The peasants streamed to the port cities, for the insurgents lived like locusts off the land, having no supply commissariat in their military organization. Consequently, among other things, a refugee problem confronted the European settlements.

The Imperialist strategy was not only to drive the rebels towards the coast, but at the same time neither to interest themselves in nor to spare any forces for the defense of the Shanghai region. This was in line with earlier events which had left the port cities to their own defenses. In the face of this political administrative-military vacuum the Europeans organized a Volunteer Corps, reinforced naval patrols, and increased regular troop units. Native merchant patriotic

associations headed by prominent Chinese bankers and traders had naturally sprung up for the defense of the port. The foreigners tended to protect their own settlements, the British making use of Regulars and Punjab infantry regiments. It soon became apparent that cooperation of all defense groups would be necessary, and that not Shanghai proper but all of the Shanghai supply area would have to be cleared of the opposing forces. This policy called for one of neutrality -- neither insurgents nor Imperialists to contest the Potung peninsula.

The Ningpo episode presents some of the elements of the change in European neutral policy in the Taiping rebellion. Already, by the end of 1860 it had become increasingly clear that Ningpo would soon be attacked by rebel forces. Consequently, Admiral Hope, British naval commander in China, (May 8, 1861) ordered Captain Dew to proceed to Ningpo to protect British residents and property. Admiral Hope explained his action to the Secretary of the Admiralty thus:

"I have ordered Captain Dew in the 'Encounter' to Shanghai, with orders to endeavour to keep the rebels out of Ningpo till Mr. Bruce can be communicated with... I have only further to observe that as any little trade which is now conducted at Shanghai arises from produce which reaches that port from Ningpo, the plunder and destruction of the latter town of the rebels will be a
serious injury to our mercantile interests."  

Admiral Hope, in addition, took the precaution of requesting the British consul to communicate directly with Capt. Dew, "should he find it consistent with his duty to sanction the use of force to secure Ningpo from the rebels, in concert, or otherwise, with the French."

Upon arrival at Ningpo, Capt. Dew strongly urged the Tao-t'ai to take immediate defense measures. The British officer was concerned over the city walls lest "in the present condition... 100 rebels could easily take the city."  

Meanwhile, Bruce was anxious that the Imperial government at Peking be informed of the British concern over Ningpo. Prince Kung, Chinese regent and ruler in

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5 Hope to Secretary of Admiralty, May 23, 1861, [29767], p. 15.


7 Harvey to Bruce, June 18, 1861, [29767], p. 66.

8 I-hsin 李新
fact, was notified that two British vessels of war had been dispatched "to urge upon the insurgents the propriety of not attacking Ningpo; that city, through the neglect of the authorities, being in a very defenseless condition." Bruce wrote further, "I must, however, impress upon your Imperial Highness again the necessity of losing no time in organizing the means of protecting both Ningpo and Shanghai.  

In spite of these attempts of the British (and of the French) to goad the Imperial government and the local officials into action, all came to nought. Foreign Office instructions had warned British commanders to maintain a strict neutrality, except to protect their own nationals, a policy, it may be noted in which the French concurred. On November 23, 1861 at a conference held at Her Britannic Majesty's consulate, Ningpo, the American and British consuls and the two French and British naval commanders agreed that they did not consider themselves authorized to extend military protection to Ningpo nor to actively oppose the rebels in any manner. If the Ningpo authorities attempted to defend the city, all that the above conferees might do would be "to afford protection to the persons and property of their respective countrymen." On December 9, 1861 the Taiping

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9 Bruce to Prince of Kung, July 11, 1861, [2976], p. 66.
10 Inclosure in No. 32, [2976], p. 85.
11 Loc. cit.
forces triumphantly entered the port and the Imperialist armies fled. Some of the local officials escaped aboard H.M.'s ship "Scout" and H.M.'s gun boat "Kestrel", and later transferred to the protection of the French naval commander, Admiral Protet, who gave them their Shanghai passage.

Later, safe aboard a British ship, the Imperialist commander at Ningpo, complained of the inadequacy of his defenses and of the dearth of supplies, food and funds, which situation resulted in the troops' low morale. It was alleged, as well, that many of the city's inhabitants and even the troops and some field leaders had gone over to the rebels. Evidently, the loss of the city had been foreseen by the Tao-t'ai. Ten days before Ningpo's fall, he had procured a small steamer (at a cost of 12,000 dollars), which he kept in waiting at the city's safest gate, for a ready exit if necessary.

Shortly after the fall of Ningpo, Admiral Hope ordered Captain Corbett, stationed at Ningpo, "to allow no interference whatever, in any way or on any pretext, with the foreign settlement." Nevertheless, the policy was to be one of

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12Harvey to Hammond, Dec. 18, 1861, [29767], p. 89.
13Inclosure 3 in No. 34, [29767], p. 93.
14Loc. cit.
15Inclosure 4 in No. 34, [29767], 96.
watchful waiting as Admiral Hope had pointed out two days before the Taiping capture of Ningpo. An opportunity would be at hand, "of ascertaining by positive experience whether it will be possible to conduct trade from a sea-port held by the Tae-pings, and should such prove to be the case, as they are in possession of all the silk districts, our commercial interests may not experience eventually much injury." The foreign community remained at Ningpo working out its own rules, settlement defenses and trade arrangements. But trade seems not to have prospered, perhaps more because of the attendant civil disorder than directly imposed Taiping restrictions. These "restrictions" seem to have been nominal; actually, trade suffered because of the flight from Ningpo of the native Chinese merchants. So the situation remained, however, until May 10, 1862, when the British and French naval forces, in retaliation for alleged rebel provocations, bombarded the port and sent its defending forces into flight. This remarkable feat is ascribed to Capt. Dew and Lt. Kenny (French Navy), employing the aid of four British and two French warships. These officers promptly turned over the city to the Imperialists. Such at least is the generally accepted version. Actually, it seems entirely probable, from a reconstruction based on the British China

16 Hope to Secretary of Admiralty, Dec. 7, 1861, 29767, 82.
17 Incl. 2 in No. 40, 29767, 113.
papers that the foreign community openly showed its enthusiasm for the approaching Imperialist troops. It is not unlikely that the European naval forces may have been anxious to speed the Taiping withdrawal from the city. The so-called "provocations" seem rather to have been the result of entanglement in cross-fire, since they are described rather vaguely. At any rate, the European community felt greater security with the city's return to Imperialist hands. Meanwhile, in the immediate vicinity of Shanghai, conditions had been serious for some months past. The rebels had completely surrounded the city and cut off communications with the interior. Provisions became scarce with resulting inflationary price trends. Prices of basic food commodities rose inordinately. Thus, at the mere rumor of the approach of Insurgent forces, rice increased in price from 4000 to 6000 cash per picul, flour from 2400 to 4400 cash per picul, and tea from 160 to 260 cash per catty. Although these figures are based on a normally fluctuating commodity currency, they are, nevertheless quoted to point up the trend. The Taipings were seen to be cutting off the city's supplies

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18 P.P., [29767], [29927], [30587] et passim.
19 Loc. cit.
20 Robertson to Hammond, Feb. 27, 1862, [29767], 153-154.
21 Medhurst to Hope, Feb. 19, 1862, [29767], 152-153.
which necessitated the Europeans' decision "to interfere with them, (...ie., the rebels) in our own defense." Nevertheless, Medhurst, H.M.'s consul at Shanghai, cautioned, "that a strictly neutral policy is at present the only correct one, and that whatever is done in the protection of this city and settlement must be undertaken with careful regard to that important axiom."

The foreign settlement at Shanghai felt the siege keenly with its devastating effects on the commerce so vital to them. Considerable martial spirit seized the Old China Hands, most of whom, though not pro-Imperialist were certainly anti-T'ai P'ing. Should the Allied Powers defend the city (...ie., attack the rebels), the local press felt sure:

"There is not a member of this community but would applaud them -- excepting probably some parties who call themselves merchants, and who transact a considerable trade in arms and ammunition with these said rebels. We have got our finger upon the names of these renegade traders, and we warn them that when a case turns up at H.M.'s Consulate we will not spare them. At present our information is 'under seal' and we are forbidden to divulge; but ere long we may dilate upon imported 'umbrellas of the Enfield pattern', and religious tracts of a combustible nature. We appeal, therefore, to our readers whether it is honourable, or even honest in the way of trade, for constituents of

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22 Loc. cit.
23 Loc. cit.
Shanghai firms in Europe to consign such wares to this port, where by doing so they add to political complications and encourage a contraband trade.

"Independent of these considerations, this encouragement of the Tae P'ing rebel cause assists in paralyzing our local commerce. Where a large trade was done in British merchandise hitherto, orders are now very much contracted." 24

It was about this time, too, that the British Chamber of Commerce, at Shanghai, passed a resolution, placing on record its opinion that the then stagnate condition of the Shanghai trade during its busiest season, could be attributed directly to the rebel presence in Kiangsu province. 25 The Chamber declared that trade had fallen off in direct ratio with the rebel advance.

At this time, Ningpo had been but recently taken by the insurgents and since its capture the demand for all imports from Shanghai had virtually ended. Ningpo, however, was not the only city important to Shanghai commerce; for the chamber protested to Consul Medhurst, at Shanghai that Nan-tsiu , the silk center had been burned by

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24 "North China and Japan Market Report", Feb. 21, 1862, as found in [29767], 154.
25 Incl. 7 in No. 2, Feb. 24, 1862 [29927], 8.
26 Loc. cit.
27 Loc. cit.
the rebels. The insecurity of life and property had reduced the export of silk by 14,000 bales. Indeed, the rebels were said to cut down the mulberry trees for fuel; and there was always the danger that marauding parties might destroy the villages at hatching time, especially hazardous, considering the continuous attention requisite to the rearing of silk worms. The tea trade suffered considerably, since practically none had arrived in the port since early 1860. It was clear that, while Shanghai might continue a substantial export-import trade via the Yangtze river, it could not recover its earlier prosperity until the surrounding terrain had been cleared of rebel strongholds. This called for the recapture of Soochow and Hangchow, the re-opening of all westward trade channels; for certainly any new rebel entrenchment on the Yangtze might cut Shanghai's trade arteries entirely.

It was thus becoming increasingly clear that the defense of Shanghai encompassed in reality its entire geographic-economic hinterlands. This was not only true of Shanghai, but it was also equally true of the other port city areas requisite to foreign trade. Furthermore, the official approach was entirely one of the localization of trouble-tension-areas and a rigid maintenance of the status quo.

28 Incl. 8 in No. 2, March 18, 1862, /2992/, 8-9.
29 Loc. cit.
This policy was best enunciated by Vice-Admiral Hope in a communication to the Admiralty:

"... it is more expedient to deal with each port as a special case when the emergency shall arise.

"I shall therefore adopt as a principle, and instruct the officers in command at the several ports to guide themselves in the course which they shall pursue under such circumstances, by that which shall have been pointed out by Mr. Bruce to the respective Consuls, and that in those cases in which the Consuls shall not have been instructed they shall endeavour to maintain the status quo of the ports until Mr. Bruce shall have been communicated with."

Even so, the Foreign Office had officially remained neutral as is plain from Russell’s instructions to Bruce in late summer 1861:

"Her Majesty's Government desire to maintain, as they have done hitherto, neutrality between the two contending parties in China. If British subjects are taken prisoners by either party, you should do your utmost to save them from torture or capital punishment, but otherwise you should abstain from all interference in the civil war."

Meanwhile, the Foreign Legion (... i.e., Ward's Force)

30 Hope to Secretary of Admiralty, April 29, 1861, [Z976], 17.

31 Russell to Bruce, Aug. 8, 1861, [Z976], 46.

32 The disciplined forces under Ward are known by a number of different names in the parliamentary papers and standard secondary sources.
continued its activities. The Legion had first come into prominence when Ward had, with a small force, successfully stormed and captured Sungkiang, (July 17, 1860). Comparatively inactive now, except for several small skirmishes the Foreign Legion continued, at least to inspire the local Chinese merchants. They were, at this time, a source of morale for the Chinese banker, "Taki" (sic, Yang Tze-tang) but not to the foreign community, the latter regarding Ward as a filibusterer. The Americans found him objectionable, because of the United States' strict policy of neutrality; British naval authorities were irritated by the loss of sailors from their men-of-war, who were being seduced away by the prospects of adventure and plunder. In May, 1861, Admiral Hope arrested Ward on the grounds of responsibility for desertions from H.M.'s navy; but, Ward, held prisoner on the Chesapeake, escaped and swam to safety. And on July 3, 1861 Bruce wrote gleefully to Russell:

"I report with satisfaction that the Foreign Legion has been disbanded... Having been unsuccessful, through no fault of their own, they were discharged; and I trust this example of the value of Chinese co-operation, and of their appreciation of military merit, will deter foreigners from joining them." 34


34Bruce to Russell, July 3, 1861, [2976], 60.
This, however, was only a temporary expedient, for by September, Ward had re-organized his force with a predominately Chinese base, drilled and officered by Europeans; the native merchants continuing their financial support. Some- time in the summer of 1861, (possibly August) Admiral Hope paid Ward a visit at his encampment, Sungkiang, and seemed quite encouraging.

At the beginning of the following year, (Jan. 12, 1862) definite plans had taken shape for a conference of military, naval and local officials for concerting a central strategy and defense for Shanghai and its environs against threatened rebel attacks. Present were Wu Chou, Tao-t'ai of Shanghai; the French and British consuls; the British and French naval and military commanders; E. Webb, Esq., commander of the Shanghai volunteers; and among others, Ying Wei-Yuan, in charge of Shanghai defenses. Her Majesty's Consul Medhurst seems to have led the discussions to ascertain (1) what resources the Tao-t'ai could make available for the city's defence, (2) what aid the Tao-t'ai could give the officers present, and (3) to devise a unified system of defence in case of attack. Consul Medhurst felt that the Tao-t'ai should be made to understand that the aid given would

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35 R. S. Rantoul, Frederick Townsend Ward, (Salem, Mass.: Historical Collections of the Essex Institute, Vol. XLIV, 1908), 33-34.

36 Incl. 4 in No. 41, [29767], 116-118.
be "in the interests of the foreign settlements and for their protection, not with a view to take up the cause of the Imperialist authorities against the Tae-pings." At this juncture, Lieut. de Vaisseau, the French naval commander, objected. "He had come to the meeting to discuss the subject of defence for the city of Shanghai, and of the foreign concessions; and if the question of giving or withholding aid to the Taoutae was introduced, he must beg leave to retire from the discussion, as it was a political question on which he was not prepared to pronounce an opinion." The British consul explained that it was merely part of his government's instructions to have this particular issue clarified, and he was quite willing to dismiss such discussion. M. B. Edan, the French Consul, interjected here that his own instructions were similar to those of the British Consul, but that he felt "it would be neither useful nor a propos" to remind the Tao-t'ai of "the true object of defence" unless exorbitant demands were made which might exceed the authority of the foreign officials. The meeting then proceeded to work out details. Wu Chou, the Tao-t'ai, stated he could have 13,600 men for the defence of Shanghai. He was also requested by M. Edan to supply large numbers of coolies for battery construction. Additional plans concerned the establishment of

37Loc. cit.
pickets, the removal of junks and general modes of cooperation in the military sphere. This conference was soon followed by others, at which the military were predominantly represented.

These meetings merely crystallized a spirit of cooperation already evident. They may have been the result of long sustained pressure on the part of local merchants exerting itself constantly for a more positive policy in the Taiping rebellion. This was certainly reflected right up to British officialdom in China. Bruce expressed himself typically on the matter, to General Sir J. Michel in a message preceding the conference (described above):

38 The direct step, however, was taken by the Tao-t'ai, Consul Medhurst informed Capt. Craigie. Major Stafford, and Mr. Webb, that the, "Tao-t'ai yesterday evening (... i.e., Jan. 10) addressed me an urgent note" describing information on the "approach of Tae-pings with large force...he begs therefore that immediate measures may be taken for putting the settlement in a state of defence, and for preparing against a surprise..."

--"It would be well, therefore, to be on the watch against attack, and if you think it advisable that the Taoutae should meet yourself and the Commanding officers of land forces and volunteers, with a view to some concerted action between you, and to your proper understanding of the resources the Chinese have at disposal, I shall be very happy to make arrangements for such a meeting forthwith."

--Incl. 3 in No. 41, Jan. 11, 1862, /29757/, 116f.

At a Special Meeting of Land-renters, Jan. 15, 1862 it was proposed "That the committee be empowered to request from the Naval Commander-in-Chief increased protection for the Settlement during the present emergency."

--Incl. 9 in No. 41, Jan. 15, 1862, /29757/, 122-126.
"My decided opinion is that it would not be safe or politic to leave Shanghai without some defence. The amount and value of British interests located at that place are enormous, and are daily increasing, as the trade of the River Yang-tze to the north of China and Japan, of which it is the entrepot, develops itself." 39

Nevertheless, Bruce continued to warn against outright intervention:

4  "The policy to be observed and the language to be used to the insurgent Chiefs is this: - We have no cause of quarrel with the Ta-peings arising out of their insurrection against the Imperial Government, nor do we pretend to dictate to the Chinese people who is to rule over them; on the other hand, any Power that claims that Empire is bound by all the obligations of the Treaties China has entered into with foreign nations." 40 (Italics supplied)

On February 13, 1862 another conference on the defense of Shanghai took place, this time involving only the French and English military and naval authorities. It was here agreed that the English and American concessions would be protected by the English forces; the French force would hold "the French concession, the city of Shanghai and faubourg of Tonga-doo." 41

The French strength totalled 900 men, 300 of whom might

39 Bruce to Hope, Dec. 30, 1861, [29767], 139f.
40 Bruce to Harvey, Feb. 1, 1862, [29767], Incl. 1 in No. 46.
41 Incl. 3 in No. 47, [29767], 149.
become a moveable column; an additional 100 seamen were available. The English force of 650 men was also capable of a 300 man movable column. Temporarily available, in addition, were 55 Marines and 200 seamen.

The Tao-t' ai remained responsible for the city's policing. He was also not to send his men out on expeditions without notifying the Consuls.

Since Wu-sung at the entrance to the Wang-poo River commanded a strategic position, it was further agreed that its defense would be in the hands of the French and English naval forces.

Meanwhile, both the British naval and military commanders urged more aggressive action. Thus Admiral Hope wrote to Bruce:

"I... strongly recommend that the French and English Commanders should be required by yourself and M. Bourboulon to free the country from rebels within a line commencing at Kading on the Yang-tze above Woo-sung River, and thence across to a walled town opposite on the Yang-tze, by which means a district of country amply sufficient for the support of Shanghai would be protected, and the town secured from the present state of chronic panic so detrimental to trade.

"Col. Ward, upon whose experience of the Chinese I am disposed to place very considerable reliance, assures me that if Imperial garrisons were placed
in the towns I have named, with the troops under his command employed as a flying column, he could effectually prevent the return of the rebels within the limits I have named...."

Less than a week later (February 28, 1862) General Sir J. Michel, in command of British troops in China, strongly urged that the maintenance of Ward's troops "would have the advantage of permitting us to retain our neutral character, whilst the Chinese Government would feel the real friendship of our counsels."

Bruce just as strongly presented a positive policy of offense for consideration of the Foreign Office:

"I do not think it will be possible to maintain much longer our present position in this contest without sacrificing our trade. Sir J. Hope has failed to obtain any promise from them (..i.e., the Taiping) to abstain from molesting the open ports, or our trade on the Yang-tze River, and they refuse compensation for robberies committed by the armed bands who, as adherents of the Taiping cause, ravage the country.

"Shanghai is threatened, and its supplies cut off, and the insurgents will be emboldened by our passiveness, and their success at Ningpo, to press us still closer. I have stated to Sir J. Hope that, in my opinion, we are perfectly justified in taking the offensive against the insurgents, if they persist in menacing Shanghai,"

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44 Michel to Bruce, Feb. 28, 1862, 30587, 21ff.
provided we can deal such a blow as is likely to keep them at a respectful distance hereafter from the positions we occupy."  

( Italics supplied )

In a characteristically brief dispatch, Earl Russel of the Foreign Office, conveyed to Bruce his approval of these views.

This was entirely in keeping with a despatch of several days earlier, in which Earl Russel had said, "I have to express to you my approval of your intention to organize a system of defence at the ports which will protect them...."

On March 19, 1862, Bruce wrote to Admiral Hope that a purely defensive policy around Shanghai, "will only increase our difficulties and endanger the security of the ports, as it will encourage armed plunderers to attack these towns, the wealth of which makes them tempting prizes." Bruce felt that the Foreigners should take the offensive lest the rebels think that they feared them.

In Shanghai at this time, the Tao-t'ai had asked permission, of the British officials, which would allow the

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45 Bruce to Russel, Mar. 4, 1862, [2992], 6f.
46 Russel to Bruce, June 2, 1862, [2992], 8. Note the time-lag in dispatches; cf. ante.
47 Russel to Bruce, May 31, 1862, [2992], 7.
48 Bruce to Hope, Mar. 19, 1862, [2992], 11.
49 Loc. cit.
Richardson firm to supply steamers for carrying 9,000 troops on the Yangtze as needed reinforcements for Sungkiang. Consul Medhurst, troubled by the Neutrality Ordinance, as to how to proceed begged instructions of Admiral Hope. H.M.'s Naval Commander agreed with the consul that the vessels should sail down the river, but considered it "inexpedient that any of these vessels after the first which delivers the dispatch should communicate with the British vessel of war stationed at Nanking."  

On March 26, 1862 Bruce wrote to the Foreign Office that in Ward's force there was the nucleus of a valuable military organization for disordered China. Her Majesty's Minister had demonstrated to the Peking regime the unreliability of the 40,000 troops on its pay lists; the same funds expended on such an impotent horde would maintain a virile disciplined army of some 20,000 men, capable of smashing the rebel bands. If only the Peking government would institute military and financial reforms, it might successfully smash "the existing anarchy, which has its origin in its weakness, even more than in its corruption." (Italics supplied) Bruce further suggested "that 10,000 stand of smooth-bore muskets...from India" be shipped immediately to arm a disciplined force for

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50Medhurst to Hope, March 21, 1862, /29927/, 9f.
51Bruce to Russel, Mar. 26, 1862, /30587/, 8f.
the protection of Tientsin "against the Shantung banditti."

Because of its expositional clarity of British policy (...i.e., Bruce's conception of such) further portions of the above quoted communication follow:

"...I suggest either that these arms be given gratis, or that time be allowed for payment. This is the cheapest and best form in which assistance can be afforded. Sir James Hope informs me he has written on the subject to India, and it is most desirable that the request be complied with, without delay...

"It may be objected to the policy I have recommended in this and in other dispatches, that there may be danger in introducing an improved military system in China. To this it may be replied with truth, that any risk arising from this cause is far less serious than the danger, commercial and political, we incur from the unchecked growth of anarchy throughout China....

"Nor do I consider that it will be a matter of regret or hostile to our interests, that China should be encouraged, by a consciousness of her strength, to use bolder language in defence of her just rights. The weakness of China, rather than her strength is likely to create a fresh Eastern question in these seas. In proportion also as the Chinese are obliged to resort to us for instruction, the policy of isolation and contempt for the outer world, from which our difficulties have mainly arisen, must be abandoned." 53

(Italics supplied)

52 Loc. cit.

53 Loc. cit.
In the same dispatch, Bruce disclosed the details of the cooperation which had developed between British-French and Imperialist forces for the defence of Shanghai. On June 12, 1862 Earl Russel replied in a typically brief dispatch. It is to be noted that absolutely no broad questions of China policy were discussed. The Foreign Office merely expressed approval of the measures taken "for relieving the country around Shanghai from the presence of the Tae-pings."

This is typical of whole series of such Russel to Hope communications, though, by no means is the China policy completely ignored.

Significantly, the Foreign Office pointed out several days later that the Chinese would themselves have to fight the Taiping's energetically or it would "be useless to attempt by an auxiliary force of foreigners to prevent the overthrow of the Government and the desolation of the country." Bruce, however, was already at war, if one may judge from his pronouncement that if the Taiping should threaten "our trade...we ought not to hesitate in striking a deadly blow at the insurrection, wherever it can be delivered with most effect."

54 Russel to Bruce, June 12, 1862, 30587, 12.
55 Ibid., June 18, 1862, 16.
56 Bruce to Russel, April 10, 1862, 30587, 18ff.
On April 13, 1862 Bruce confided to Admiral Hope that, "I have full reliance on your judgement; and if, on consideration, (...i.e., the necessity of clearing the immediate vicinity of Shanghai of insurgents) you decide on immediate action, I will support the course you adopt." (Italics supplied). H.M.'s Minister, in justification of the policy adopted, stated: "The measures taken by the English and French naval authorities are strictly measures of self defense." This last dispatch the Foreign Office received on July 5. In reply Russel argued that:

"..."if we were to undertake to put down the Tae-ping rebellion, we should soon be engaged in an extensive war, while the Chinese Government would only look on and leave the burthen and expense of it to us.

"The rational course for us to pursue is, to defend our own trade, to protect the Treaty-ports, and to encourage the Chinese Government to arm a sufficient force of Artillery, Infantry and Cavalry, to overcome the rebels and reduce them to subjugation." 59

It was the tone of such communications which would seem to have prompted Bruce to write Brig.-General Stavely, earlier, "But I understand the guarded tone of the instruc-

57 Bruce to Hope, April 13, 1862, [30537], 20.
58 Bruce to Russel, April 21, 1862, [30537], 21.
59 Russel to Bruce, July 7, 1862, [30537], 26.
tions of the Government." (Italics supplied)

At any rate, Admirals Hope and Protet (French Naval Commander) and General Stavely, the British Commander in China, met at a military defense conference in Shanghai, April 22, 1862 at which it was agreed on a plan of defense for Shanghai. It would be necessary to occupy a district of country about that great port, which would insure the population's supply needs; the rebels would be kept at such a distance as to preclude any feeling of insecurity which "has been so detrimental to ... commerce."

As the campaigns about Shanghai progressed, the foreign forces found themselves increasingly more advanced in point of distance from the city's environs. It was thought at first that Imperialist cooperation would extend at least to the garrisoning of captured towns. But even for this the Imperialist troops could not be depended upon; nor were the local officials reliable even for routine administrative duties, let alone the raising of military revenues or troop levies. The Peking regime seemed unconcerned over local difficulties. Perhaps this seeming unconcern may have been prompted by certain knowledge that the Europeans would defend their own trade interests. As a result of the Imperialist

60 Bruce to Stavely, April 23, 1862, [30587], 24f.
61 Incl. 2 in No. 21, [30587], 27.
reluctance to hold and garrison the points taken by the Allies, it became evident that the foreigners would have to accomplish the task themselves. Naturally each new city, town, or village captured from the insurgents could not be left unguarded, lest the Taipings return in strength. Thus it was that the perimeter defense of Shanghai actually called for the defense of neighboring cities, which in turn demanded garrisons of towns on the perimeter of the defense of these cities and so on, ad infinitum. However, this fanning out all over China in pursuit of the Taipings was actually prohibited by certain fundamental tenets in Britain's China policy, as discussed elsewhere in this paper.

Even the prospect of capturing Nanking had been frowned upon. While the latter decision had been laid down in earlier policy it seems to have been an element in the thinking of Bruce, Hope and the Foreign Office throughout. Thus Bruce had debated the question with Hope:

"...I do not see that the fall of Nanking would dissolve the bands who desolate the country, and unless the success were achieved by Imperial arms, it would not be safe to assume that its effect would restore the belief of the Chinese in the vigour and power of the Imperial arms, which is indispensable, if China under the existing dynasty is to escape from her present state of internal insurrection and disorganization, and return to the condition of internal peace, from the absence of which commerce and trade are suffering so severely."62

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62 Bruce to Hope, June 16, 1861, [29767], 56ff.
If the British were to attack Nanking, the rebels would retreat to other points, and render trade impossible altogether; and feeling themselves safe from English naval pressure they would hardly be "amenable to reason."  

Although Admiral Hope considered the proposed capture of Nanking as a "most impolitic act," a heavier consideration may have been the fact that the Imperialist commanders strongly objected to the foreigners' capture of the Taiping headquarters. For reasons of direct prestige and morale it was necessary that Chinese troops under Chinese officers deal the coup de grace to the T'ai-p'ing t'ien-kuo. Tseng Kuo-fan declined the aid of the foreigners in the capture of Nanking.

To return to the Shanghai situation it might be interesting to note what European forces were available in the Spring of 1862. There were in all 2921 troops, including 64 European and 23 native officers. The total of 22 guns included six 12 pounder Armstrong guns, two 9 pounder guns, one 24 pounder howitzer, seven 4 2/5 inch howitzers, and six 5½ inch mortars.

The French seem to have had about 800 soldiers and

63 Loc. cit.
64 Hope to Bruce, July 11, 1861, 729767, 59.
65 Hummel, 2:751-756; 749-751.
66 Stavely to Lewis, April 25, 1862, 30587, 27.
sailors. The Ever-Victorious Army numbered from 400 to 1800 and probably occasionally ran higher than 1800. It is difficult to gauge their exact numbers, since they were in a constant state of flux, due to increased volunteers and desertions, since, basically, they were a mercenary force.

British and French naval support varied from a dozen ships to several times that number. In addition, these ships carried complements capable of being put in the field as naval brigades and marine units, numbering not less than two or three hundred and frequently more.

About this time, Hope suggested to the Secretary of the Admiralty the feasibility of organizing a large disciplined force on the order of Ward's men. It was estimated that 1200 men would cost $45,000 per year. Five such battalions (6,000 men) could be supported for $225,000, with $75,000 for arms and supplies. About $200,000 per annum would cover total expenses of such a force. Admiral Hope pointed out that the Customs Revenue for 1861, (at Shanghai) exceeded $700,000 and if all expenses (...i.e., the payment of indemnities, cost of collection, etc.) were deducted, there might still be plenty remaining for the support of five battalions, which it was felt, apparently, would be more than adequate for the defense of the port.

67 Hope to Secretary of Admiralty, May 31, 1862, [3058], 41.
68 Loc. cit. The estimates were those of Col. Ward and Major Stafford (22nd Punjab Inf.).
Several weeks later, Hope again "suggested" the formation of a body of 6000 Chinese troops "disciplined in the European mode for the defence of the city."

Here is seen the steady pressure for intervention by British Consuls in China, as well as naval and military personnel. The pressure of the merchants, though considerable, has been in this account, largely neglected. To all of this, the Foreign Office yielded but slowly and then never entirely. In the defense of the port cities, so-called defensive actions developed inevitably into full-fledged offensive campaigns, aimed at holding and consolidating gains. The Foreign Office found itself presented with faits accomplis, despite its "guarded tone" and in a delicate position from which it could, but with difficulty, if at all, extricate itself.

However, certain definite legal restrictions remained in force which hampered would-be interventionists. First, among older statutes, there stood the 1819 Act of the British Parliament, which expressly prohibited English subjects from taking foreign military service or equipping vessels of war for foreign powers in H.M.'s domains, without license from the crown. Then there lurked Sir John Bowring's Neutrality

69 Hope to Secy. of Admiralty, June 17, 1862, /30527/, 27f.
70 Pelcovitz, passim.
71 July 3, 1819. British and Foreign State Papers, VI:130.
Ordinance of 1854, which had made it an offense punishable by fine or by imprisonment, to serve the Chinese government or the rebels in a military capacity, or to supply either party with munitions of war. There seems also to have been a Hong Kong (sic., Neutrality?) Ordnance, No. 1 of 1855, in force until 1856, which was then renewed, but allowed to expire the 1st of January, 1857. Nevertheless, as C. Paget, Secretary to the Admiralty, informed the Foreign Office, "the order in question (...i.e., the Order of 1854) has already been virtually abrogated by the recent instructions to British authorities in China." He further stated the Admiralty would not object to grants of leave to officers, not indispensable, who might wish to enlist their services for the Chinese; they would, however, have to apply through the Foreign Office for final authority.

It would seem that Mr. Lay's request to outfit an Anglo-Chinese flotilla for the Imperial government touched off the discussions in the British government as cited above.

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72 Lay to Russel, June 16, 1862, 30577, 1.
73 Rogers to Hammond, July 1, 1862, 30577, 3.
74 Paget to Hammond, June 25, 1862, 30577, 2.
75 loc. cit.
76 Corr. resp., employment under Govt. China, Naval Mil. Officers of H.M. 30577. Mr. Lay, the English Inspector General of the China Maritime Customs, was then in England for reasons of health. Sir R. Hart, the acting I.G. in Lay's stead communicated to him the decision of the Chinese government to outfit a modern navy with English vessels. The entire
At any rate, on July 3, 1862, the Foreign Office was prepared to offer its official imprimatur to those who might want to participate against the Taipings (and especially for H.M.'s active officers). Thus, Mr. Layard, of the Foreign Office, wrote to the Secretary of the Admiralty that the Admiralty might state on Earl Russell's authority that no legal difficulties would hamper English subjects enlisting in the Chinese naval or military services, provided they received the crown's sanction. 77

The Admiralty, however, qualified its endorsement of the volunteers by issuing the following notice:

"Service performed under the Imperial Government of China will not be considered as service in the Navy, as regards pay, time, promotion, etc.

"In the event of the Senior Officer in command having the power, under the Imperial Chinese Government, of awarding promotion in that service to officers serving under his command, the same will not be considered as a promotion in the Royal Navy.

"In the event of an officer being wounded in the service, he will not be entitled to a pension for wounds; nor, if killed in action, will his widow be

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episode is given a considerably fuller treatment in the final chapter of this account. This departure from chronological sequence is considered necessary as the separate narrative of the Lay-Osborn flotilla is intelligible only after a study of British China policy, 1860-1864.

77Layard to Admiralty, July 3, 1862, L30577, No. 7.
entitled to any more than the ordinary pension awarded to the widow of an officer dying while on half-pay."

Mr. Lay's desire, not simply to have the Queen's license to enlist in the Chinese military and naval forces, but also for leave to fit out and equip vessels for war-like purposes in China, and to enlist British subjects to serve in naval and military operations in China -- this required an Order in Council. Such an Order was promptly announced, August 30, 1862.

The Order became effective as of September 1st for a period of two years. It became lawful for every British subject to enlist and enter himself (in the military and naval service of the Emperor of China) by engaging and enlisting himself with the said H.N. Lay and S. Osborn, and no other person or persons whatsoever." (Italics supplied). The Order, thus, restricted recruiting to the sphere of "certain British Officers."

Meantime, Bruce had complained to the Foreign Office about the ease with which the rebels were obtaining arms and supplies, from the foreign traders. Russel's reply included

78 "Notice to Officers Volunteering for Service Under the Chinese Gov't.", Admiralty, July 12, 1862, 3057, 5.
79 State Papers, 52:482.
80 Loc. cit.
a carte blanche to H.M.'s minister to China for the issuance of a Draft Rule or Regulation (authorized by Order in Council). This Draft Rule or Regulation forbade trading in arms "except under special license from one of H.M.'s Consular Officers in China, and under the express Condition and guarantee that none of the aforesaid articles (a reference to a preceding list) are destined for the use of the insurgents in arms against H.M.'s ally the Emperor of China."

This virtual arms embargo on the insurgent forces was more than tacit recognition of the authority of the Imperial government -- it was a definite interventionist step, although a tempered one. It represented a conventional policy, since, after all, the Peking regime was the legally constituted authority in the land.

The final and complete step took place on January 9, 1863. This is the date of the Order in Council, which

81Russel to Bruce, Nov. 13, 1862, /31047/, 74.
82Draft Rule or Regulation, /31047/, 75.
83This date may be considered the point from which all future intervention is official, unfettered and quite legal. It is, however, the contention here that this breaking-off point is purely arbitrary and of chronological convenience only.
permitted all British military officers to enter the service of the Chinese emperor. The Order became effective as of December 16, 1862; it was to remain in force until September 1, 1864. Thus it was now possible for bona fide officers in H.M.'s military forces to enlist directly in the service of the Chinese government. The two Orders are seen to have sanctioned volunteering from among the active lists. There was as yet, emphatically no official dispatching of military or naval units for the expressed purpose of aiding one of the contending parties in the Chinese civil war. Such actual units as continued to clear the country about the port cities of rebel forces, did so purely as measures of defense. Where tactical cooperation with the Imperialists overstepped the bounds of the Government's instructions, it would seem to have been uninspired by official policy.

It is now necessary to consider the development of a joint British-Chinese command for the Ever-Victorious Army. On September 21, 1862 the town of Tzeki fell by assault, the Ever-Victorious Army playing its active role; Ward, however, was mortally wounded in the engagement. Li Hung-Chang, after assuming temporary control, appointed Burgevine as the new commander. Burgevine's appointment had

84State Papers, 53:312.

85This is primarily the present writer's contention based on an examination of the British blue books (China), et al.
been strongly supported by Admiral Hope; it was not to Li's pleasure, however. After a series of quarrels between Burgevine and Li Hung Chang, and with Taki, the Shanghai banker, and other Chinese officials, Li asked General Stavely to inform the impetuous American of his dismissal. The British commander also was requested to nominate a new commanding officer for the Ever-Victorious Army. General Stavely appointed Capt. Holland of the Royal Marine Light Infantry to the temporary command on January 15, 1863.

An official agreement was soon drawn up for subordinating the Ever-Victorious Army to the joint command, which would consist of Chinese and foreign officers; these latter would be appointed by Li Hung-chang and the English commander, Brig.-General Stavely. It was stipulated that the joint command would be, temporarily, headed by Capt. Holland. Meanwhile, Captain Gordon would be recommended to Peking as the permanent commander of the force, officially enlisted with the Chinese Government. Li Hung-chang, the Fu-t'ai 撫督 appointed Futsiang and Li Hung

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86 Of Statement by Burgevine, Jan. 10, 1863, 3297/19.
87 Stavely to Lewis, Jan. 8, 1864, 3297/18.
88 Incl. 4 in No. 9, 3297/18. Note: The above inclosure appears in a dispatch of Medhurst to Russel, dated Jan. 22, 1863.
89 Loc. cit.
90 Hsün-fu 必撫 Governor; also held ex officio Board of War and Censorate duties.
Sung to the Joint Command. Article 2 of the agreement warned: "No expeditions shall be undertaken beyond the radius of 30 miles without previous discussion with the allies (...i.e., England and France)." Consent of the allies would not be required, however, for sudden expeditions within those limits. The force was to be maintained, at a strength of 3,000 troops, the actual number depending upon the customs house receipts. Articles 6 and 13 are quoted at great length below, as they indicate some of the important arrangements:

"Art. 6. Orders on the Hae-quan Bank for 6 months' pay shall be issued twice every year, payable as due monthly, the amount to be settled when the standing of the force is arranged.

"Art. 13. The British Commander is only to leave the force (if at his own request) with the consent of the British Commander-in-chief, obtained and signified through the Consul. If the Chinese are dissatisfied with the Commander, they shall not dismiss him without a judicial inquiry (in which the Consul shall take part) and due notice to the British Commander-in-chief. In either case three months' notice must be given. All subordinate officers are to be appointed at the discretion of the Joint Commanders...."91

After a period of lull and reorganizational activity, the Chinese commanders determined that the Ever-Victorious Army should again take the field. Accordingly, on February 15, 91Loc. cit.
1863, Capt. Holland with 2500 infantry and 700 artillerymen, employing 22 guns, assaulted the town of Taitsang. Here the mixed force met a terrible defeat. The Ever-Victorious Army had made certain tactical errors, and against the heavily garrisoned insurgent stronghold, it had "neglected proper reconnoitre." In addition, Governor Li had determined upon using the force to attack a walled city (i.e., Taitsang) and in so doing, had completely disregarded the seasoned advice of General Stavely. Furthermore, the expedition had gone beyond the 30-mile limit agreed upon in the Agreement on Joint Command (as cited above). The British Commander's decision to allow Capt. Holland and the other British Officers to go with the force, despite his better judgment, was due to certain knowledge that Governor Li would send the troops, with or without their command.

Though the affair ended in disaster, and though Capt. Holland's demotion was demanded by his men, that ill-starred commander was not entirely to blame, for the disaster was

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Stavely to Bruce, Feb. 21, 1863, 32927, 60.

Note: A Listing of the total force employed at Taitsan follows:

2400 troops - Ward's force
Four - 32 pounders
Ten - 12 pounders
Two - 8 inch mortars
5000 troops - Governor Li's men, armed with percussion muskets.
largely the consequence of Foreign Office policy. Thus, earlier in the year, the government had stated it had no objection to British "instructors" at the service of the Imperialist armies, but they would not be free to "act in the field with the forces which they are engaged in instructing." Shanghai was an exception, however:

"... Within that space, (...ie., the 30 mile radius) therefore, Lord Russell sees no objection to allow that British officers and men who may have been detached from their regiments as instructors of the Chinese troops, shall act with those troops in the field against the Taiping. In so doing they will be carrying out operations in which, if they had continued with their regiments, the regiments to which they belong might properly have been engaged. But as the British regiments to which they belong cannot overpass the 30 mile limit in prosecution of hostile operations against the Taiping, so neither should the British instructors accompany the Chinese troops in military operations beyond the limit."  

This statement of policy had been issued the same day as the order in Council of January 9. However, it preceded the Order in time, though the Foreign Office was quite aware that the government would soon release an Order in Council, which would permit English officers to enlist with the Chinese Government. It was further stated that British officers

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93 Hammond to Lugard, Jan. 9, 1863, 31047, 119.
94 Ibid., 119f.
95 Loc. cit.
who might volunteer with such permission would for the present, at least, be in the direct service of the Chinese government. Such officers would be on half-pay status (with respect to their home organizations), and would not, thus, be subject to the restrictions governing instructors, detached from their regiment. The confusion emanating from these qualified stipulations is best observed in the case of Capt. Holland and the attempted assault on Taitsang.

General Stavely had prohibited Captain Holland from commanding the Ever-Victorious Army beyond the Leho river, which constituted the boundary-limits, predetermined for the definitely restricted operations of British forces. Objections were pointed out "to the course thus adopted in depriving the force of its commanding officers at a time when the services of the latter would be most urgently required."

The 30 mile limit, the result of a decision of the British government officially communicated Jan. 9, 1863, was, of course, the root of the trouble. As Major-General Forster protested to the Under-Secretary of State for War, this "cannot but lead to confusion, as under these circumstances the force, in the event of hostilities being commenced close to and afterwards carried beyond, (...) ie., the 30 mile limit"

96 Loc. cit.
97 Lugard to Hammond, April 11, 1863, 32957, 30.
98 Loc. cit.
the force would suddenly be deprived of commanding officers and left to fight without them because the thirty-mile radius had been passed." The men could hardly be expected to comprehend such an arrangement, "and the result would be that they would look down upon their officers."

To such protests the Foreign Office did not deny that there is an inconvenience in the state of things...but that H.M.'s Government cannot allow British officers, who are only temporarily detached from their regiments, to be making war upon the Tae-pings all over China. The remedy is obviously to limit the operations of those troops, so long as they are commanded by officers in the active service of H.M.'s Government, to the neighborhood of the Treaty ports.

"The Chinese Government would probably then find it to their advantage to retain the British officers, and not employ these troops in general operations against the Tae-pings." 101

After Captain Holland's dismissal, the complicated problem of the 30-mile limit continued to spell confusion. Brigadier-General Stavely, who now announced the appointment of a certain Major Gordon as commander of the Ward Force, 102

99 Forster to Under-Secy. of State for War, April 8, 1863, [32927], 31.
100 Loc. cit.
101 Hammond to Lugard, April 21, 1863, [32927], 61.
102 The brevity of this allusion to Gordon is shortly remedied (in the following chapter) where that swashbuckling Victorian is more properly introduced, albeit not idealized.
requested further information concerning the lifting of
territorial limits for Her Majesty's officers volunteering for service with Peking. Consequently, the Foreign Office dispatched the following for further clarification:

"... it appears to Lord Russel that the only rule Her Majesty's Government can lay down for the Chinese service, is that those officers who choose to go on half-pay with the Queen's license, should be at liberty to serve in any part of China they please, but the officers who retain their regimental rank should keep within the 30-mile limit."

On March 25, 1863, Major Gordon assumed full command of the Ever-Victorious Army. He continued as a British officer, at half-pay, along with a number of other English officers. These men retained full rank in their home organizations, as well. Gordon's command may be considered as the period of official British support of the Ever-Victorious Army. This London demarche concludes the adventurer-interventionist episode, about which H.M.'s Minister Sir F. Bruce had so frequently complained.

103 Stavely to de Grey and Ripon, Feb., 1863, 32957, 59-60. Note: The Order in Council of Jan. 9, 1863, and a communication approving in principle the appointment of a British officer to command the E.-V.A. seems to have arrived in Feb.

104 Major Gordon was accompanied by several other British officers, viz., Wood, Danyells, Kingsley, Cardew, Clayton, and Stevens. See above dispatch.

105 Hammond to Lugard, April 23, 1863, 32957, 62.

106 Bruce to Russel, March 14, 1863, 32957, 67: "...I
It should be borne in mind, however, that the regular British units and their officers were not at any time legally permitted beyond the 30-mile limit. These latter land forces participated only in the perimeter defense of Shanghai and its environs. The loaning of British regular officers to the Emperor of China, to instruct and command mixed forces, constituted a kind of intervention which did not carry with it administrative and garrisoning responsibilities. At the same time, this policy tended to enhance the prestige of Imperial arms and strengthen the authority of the Peking regime. British aid to Peking was always distinctly limited; it was primarily motivated by considerations of the needs of the China merchants, and incidentally, it rescued the native Chinese commercial classes. The merchants were the core of the foreign settlements, and it was about the port cities

think the time is come for taking the force out of the hands of adventurers, and of placing it under officers whose position in the military service of their own country is a guarantee both for their military knowledge and for their economical organization of the force. This is more particularly necessary in a force which is organized primarily with a view to the defense of Shanghai, for the foreign interests are large and tempting, and the force which is to protect them ought to be one that can be thoroughly relied upon."

107 Sir F. Bruce, summing up the recent situation at Shanghai, wrote: "The growth of Shanghai is wonderful; its population is estimated at 1,500,000, and it bids fair to become soon the most important city of the East. The Chinese flock to it on account of the security it enjoys, and the silk manufacture, which was destroyed by the Tae-ping occupation of Soo-chow and Hang-chow, is taking root at Shanghai. "It is a subject of great satisfaction to me that our resolution to save Shanghae from the destruction that menaced it at the hands of the Tae-ping hordes has not only
that European military activity most concerned itself. Always, Foreign Office policy found itself forcibly pressured, bullied and adjusted by the English traders and British military and naval personnel stationed in China. Englishmen came to China to trade, and those who traded demanded full protection of their interests, and under any guise.

been productive of great benefit to trade, but has afforded a safe asylum and an escape from ruin to so large a body of the industrious and respectable native population."

( Italics supplied ).

-- Bruce to Russel, April 30, 1863, 32957, 93-94.
CHAPTER III

Gordon and Official British-Manchu Cooperation
No account of British intervention can be complete without an extended discussion of the Gordon episode. Charles George Gordon was born the 28th of January, 1833 in a family endowed with a rich military tradition. This is by no means intended to be even a partial biographical account. Suffice it to say that Gordon developed in the professional aristocratic military schools of Victorian empire-minded Britain. With this was blended in the youthful Gordon a quite astonishing admixture of Christianity.  

\[1\] A Chinese scholar, Li Ung Bing has devoted but two slim paragraphs to the Ever-Victorious Army and but incidental references to Gordon. This approach while rectifying the over-emphasis of western scholars, nevertheless is in itself unbalanced. Li's treatment of the Tai-ping rebellion is otherwise a fair account. Cf. Li Ung Bing, Outlines of Chinese History, ed. by Prof. Joseph Whiteside (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1914), 537-538; 539-540.  

\[2\] Cf. Demetrius C. Boulger, The Life of Gordon (London: 1896). Personal details are based on this source.  

\[3\] Cf. Boulger, or Hake for a typically charming nineteenth century genealogical history, complete with name origins.  

"Chinese Gordon" arrived in China on the 26th September, 1860, ostensibly to participate not in the suppression of the Taiping rebels but in the allied show of force at the Taku forts. The British and other Europeans were then concerned with forcing upon the Manchu regime ratification of the Treaty of Tientsin. Gordon, but recently returned from the Crimean front, "arrived rather late for the amusement, which won't vex mother." By March 1862, the Allies were satisfied that the treaty would be honored and a large now idle force in North China appeared unnecessary. Furthermore, Shanghai seemed in grave peril from the latest Taiping advances, whose leaders desperately needed the arms and supplies which that great entrepot might yield. Consequently, General Stavely, in command of the British troops in the Tientsin region, removed to the Shanghai area; Gordon, in a sort of detached status as an engineer-surveyor, left shortly thereafter, but not with the main body of troops. In the Shanghai 30-mile perimeter defense, Gordon, now Major Gordon, remained on special duty, surveying and mapping the entire region. Gordon's special relationship to General

5 Boulger, 45-77.

6 Letter by Gordon to his mother, as quoted in Ibid., 45.

7 Stavely's wife, Lady Gordon was the widow of Sir Henry Gordon, older brother of Charles Gordon. Gordon, however, resented the implication of this relationship and wrote as early as May 1861: "I was much put out in Henry's writing, and I think hinting he could do something for me, and I went
Stavely, (Commander of H.M.'s Army in China) may have given him a privileged position, aside from the fact that as a Royal Engineer it would not have been uncommon for him to spend his time making topographical surveys. This surveying experience would prove later of inestimable value in planning the strategy which cut the 'Taipings' off from the sea.

Gordon, however, was by no means idling his time away. It will be recalled that Captain Holland had been placed in temporary command of the Ever-Victorious Army, after Ward's death and Burgevine's subsequent dismissal. Sir Charles Stavely had originally suggested a Colonel Forrester, but as it seemed that that officer could not take command for reasons of ill health, then the British Commander was prepared "to recommend Captain Gordon, R.E., for the permanent joint command." This latter recommendation was actually incorporated into the Agreement for the Joint Command of the

to see Stavely and told him so. It is the bother of one's life to be trying after the honours of the profession, and it has grown in late years into a regular trade -- everyone uses private interests." -- Cf. Boulger, 60.

Boulger, 52. Boulger is mainly relied on for personal details culled from the original Gordon papers. He claims to have known Gordon, H. Macartney, and others. His work is consequently replete with anecdotes, personal reminiscences, oral communications, and private papers. Boulger is, however, by his own admission, biased in Gordon's favor, not unlike most of the man's biographers.

Stavely to Medhurst, Jan. 12, 1863, [32957], 24.
Ever-Victorious Army. Absolute authority, of course, could issue from London only. In the interim, Gordon busied himself with his topographical surveys, but that his military plans were uppermost in his mind seems evident from the passionate hope that "the Government (will) support the propositions which are made to the Chinese." Finally, in February 1863, a government dispatch arrived, "approving of a British officer being placed in command of the Ward Force." This was accompanied by the most important new Order in Council of January 9, 1863 which authorized English officers to serve the Chinese emperor.

Some five or six weeks later, Major Gordon proceeded to Sungkiang, the headquarters of the Ever-Victorious Army. His arrival was hardly premature. Ward's death, followed by Burgevine's unsavory leadership which had been vigorously protested by Li Hung-chang, Burgevine's subsequent dismissal,

\[\text{Cf. Agreement, } L32957, 21-22.\]

**11** These surveys encompassed the whole 30-mile defense region about Shanghai. Gordon's mapping of the terrain literally exhausted the countryside. The future strategical value of this study is quite obvious.

\[\text{Letter by Gordon, cited in Boulger, 53.}\]

**12** February 15, 1863 is the date given by Boulger, Halliday Macartney, 77 and Wilson, Ever-Victorious Army, 125. These two sources are cited by Morse, I.R.E.E., 2:93 (footnote no. 13). Feb. 15 is the same day that the debacle at Thitsang occurred. However, the parliamentary papers reveal no more than the month. Cf. Stavely to de Grey and Ripon, L32957, 59-60.
the temporary command under Captain Holland and finally, the ignominious defeat at Taitsang -- all of these factors contributed to the lowest esprit'de corps' since the force's beginnings. Indeed, the men were sulky and even contemptuous of their new commander. Gordon was an Englishman; most of the officers were Americans and their former commanders, Ward and Burgevine had been Americans. Gordon, according to all the conventional accounts, is then supposed to have delivered an assuring address and in a comparatively short time he had become a hero to the now rejuvenated Ever-Victorious Army. The first task of Major Gordon revolved about the desire to regain prestige for the reactivated force -- to convince its Chinese supporters that the force was worth its average monthly ration of £20,000 a month. Gordon's personality must have made an enormous impression, for only two days after his arrival Li Hung-chang had already convinced himself of the Englishman's superior qualities.

14Wilson, Ever-Victorious Army, cited in Morse, 2:94.
16Although the Chinese were still supporting these foreign officers and their Chinese troops, the Taitsang debacle had considerably cooled their ardour.
17Boulger, 81.
Li's diary for March 27 reads as follows:

"It is a direct blessing from Heaven, I believe, the coming of this British Gordon, whom I am already designating General... now that I have met him personally, and we are quite like friends, I am very well pleased with him.

"He is superior in manner and bearing to any of the foreigners I have come into contact with, and does not show outwardly that conceit which makes most of them repugnant in my sight. Besides, while he is possessed of a splendid military bearing, he is direct and businesslike. Within two hours after his arrival he was inspecting the troops and giving orders; and I could not but rejoice at the manner in which his commands were obeyed." 18

Li, however, expressed his amazement "that the British Government simply 'lends' him to us, and that he will not be on the Imperial pay-roll at all." This seemed a dangerous precedent since it is difficult to control personnel not dependent on pay.


19 Ibid., 61.

20 Earlier, Li on first hearing of this non-payment scheme, was quite pleased because of the depletion of the provincial treasuries. But he could not but wonder "that this officer is not worth much, and that he is of little service to his own Government? In these days valuable services are seldom given unless something of equal or greater worth is expected in return." — Ibid., 57.
Gordon's first campaign culminated in a singularly timely success. On April 2, 1863 the Sungkiang force left its training camp with 2200 troops and a dozen cannon, to attack Changshu. This was a fairly large city, some 60 miles north-east of Soochow. At Fushan, some 6000 Imperialist troops added strength to the small contingent; this re-enforced army group marched on Ch'angshu, where the defending Taiping forces met a conclusive defeat on April 7. Ch'angshu had actually been garrisoned by former Taipings who had come over to the Imperialist side, when shortly afterwards, other insurgents appeared and besieged the new defenders. Gordon's exploit was thus, in the nature of a relief expedition. General Stavely, however, did not fail to call the brilliancy of this achievement to the attention of his immediate superior.

Gordon immediately returned with his men to Sungkiang, the unit's training headquarters, and commenced fervent preparations for further operations. Such unexpected effi-

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21 Morse, 2:94. Morse does not indicate his source. Li Hung Chang claimed the number of troops as 3000 for the Ever-Victorious Army and 15,000-16,000 for the Imperialist force. Cf. Li, Memoirs, 61.

22 For a vivid battle account see, Gordon's own report, Memorandum on Operations, Chanyu, etc., 32927, 76-78.

23 Stavely to Lewis, April 17, 1863, 32927, 81.

24 Loc. cit.
ciency and devotion to the Imperialist cause fairly astonished the Chinese leadership. Li Hung chang forthwith memorialized Peking to confer upon Gordon the title of Tsung-ping.

The generosity with which Li Hung chang raised Gordon to the rank of general has frequently been cited, as above, but without further analysis. In appearance it is a fine gesture, but in reality Li may have had quite definite motives in mind. It is necessary to examine a part of Li's memorial to the throne, which follows.

"Last winter, General Stavely agreed, with your Minister [Li Hung-chang], that the foreign officer in command should rank with a chentae or Taotae, and it seems right, therefore, that Gordon should do so, and the temporary office and dignity of Chinese Tsung-ping is therefore respectfully craved for him, that your Minister may command and direct him; the commission to be cancelled when everything is over, and he returns to his native country." (Italics supplied)

25 Le, Footae, to Vice-Consul Markham, April 24, 1863, 32957, 82-83.

26 Tsung-ping 睦兵. This is the rank of a Chinese Brigade General. Traditionally, this rank has been held by Chinese, but it has also been held by Bannermen. The term chen-t'ai 鎮 兵 is interchangeable with tsung-ping and is the more common designation. Cf. William F. Mayers, The Chinese Government, (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, Ltd., 1877?), 65. Additional Note: The term used in the parliamentary papers is frequently Chentae or Taotae.

27 Morse, 2:95; Boulger, 80.

28 Memorial, 32957, 84.
The proposed office would be ephemeral; the rank was such that Gordon, a foreigner intervening in a Chinese civil war, would be directly under the command of a Chinese, viz., Li Hung-chang. There may have been one further consideration. It is not at all improbable that Li was anxious to have Gordon confirmed as head of the Ward force, at this time, particularly, since Burgevine had not yet given up his attempts at reinstatement as rightful successor to Ward's command. There was still a large Burgevine faction in the force. If Peking officially sanctioned Gordon as commander with full rank, there could be no further grounds for Burgevine's case, for Gordon's command would at least be an accomplished fact.

Meanwhile, at Sungkiang, Gordon boosted the total strength of the force to some 4,000 men, organized intense offensive maneuvers, and prepared a naval flotilla of small steamers and gunboats. Major Gordon made full use of his

29 Li's diary throws a revealing light on his attitude towards foreigners:
"June (?) 1860 -- "...It has never been my belief that it was well to encourage foreigners to meddle in the home affairs of the kingdom..." -- page 53.

And again (sometime in 1863) -- "...I hate all these foreigners, but it would not be wise to let them know. It is not the men personally that I dislike, but it is their airs of wonderful superiority." Li, Memoirs, 58.

30 Boulger, 81.
past topographic experience, now -- formulating a definitive strategy to be employed against the Taipings. The insurgents' objective had been for some years to control fully the Yangtze River and, concomitant with this, to control the coast along the Potung peninsula, the Shanghai front as well as hinterlands. Consequently, the rebels had exerted gargantuan efforts to shoot control-prongs all about the Shanghai 30-mile limits area. Without any further binding promises (after 1862) with the European settlement, they had been attempting to puncture the Allied defense perimeter, and to strangle Shanghai's commercial-trade lifelines. This has been recounted elsewhere, but it must be kept clearly in mind for an understanding of Gordon's strategy. Since the regular British troops suffered the seriously delimiting restrictions of the 30-mile limits policy imposed by the Foreign Office, and since the provincial braves and other armies operating against the main bodies of the Taipings forces, depended upon the Europeans to shift for themselves, therefore it was extremely important that there should be a third force charged with offensive power. The need for such an uninhibited striking army had been inadequately and carelessly met by the so-called Ward's force. Gordon and his lieutenants, as half-pay British officers, gave the Ever-Victorious Army a new vitality and new prestige, especially in view of its unofficial support by the regular British military-naval personnel and their superior fire-power. Thus, secure in the
knowledge that his rear was fully protected, Gordon could strike out. He consequently mapped out a counter-strategy to meet the Taiping threat. The force at Sungkiang would have to attack with rapidity and decisiveness; it would have to cut off all the rebel extensions into the Potung peninsula, to keep the insurgents from reaching the sea, and to cut the rebel communications along the Yangtze river.  

After a brief respite, the Sungkiang force set off (April 28) for Taitsang, the scene of Holland's defeat, where even more recently, Li's brother had fallen into a trap set by the Insurgents. It may be recalled that it was after Holland's defeat that command of the E-VA fell to Gordon. The history of the whole affair runs as follows.

With the fall of Ch'anshu the rebel leader Tsah, at Taitsang, feeling uneasy and isolated indicated to Li his desire to surrender. However, he felt that he must save face and "wanted the Footae (sic, Fu t'ai) to make a show of attacking it... This caused Holland's attack, which, however, seems to have quite altered affairs. The Chung Wang

31 The Taipings at this time still retained Hangchow and controlled the Yangtze river to within some ten miles of the Woosung river entrance to Shanghai. This gave the insurgents an excellent port for buying ammunition and supplies from the European smugglers, whose trade, though illicit, was quite lucrative. -- Loc. cit.


33 Tsah. This is the name mentioned by Gordon. Cf. Loc. cit.
arrived at Taitsang the day after Holland's repulse, and gave large rewards to all concerned..." After, the departure of the Chung 'ang (one of the top rebel military chieftains, Tsah repeated his overtures to the Fu t'ai and shortly, Li's brother came up with a force of some 2000 Imperial troops. A date was fixed (April 26) for the city's surrender. An arrangement seems to have been made, also, to absorb the rebel prisoners into the Imperialist army, and some four hundred mandarin hats, as well as numerous Imperialist uniforms were sent to the insurgent garrisons for this purpose. The day arrived and the Imperialists advanced into the town, when suddenly the rebels closed in, seizing almost half the troops and their equipment. Some 300 prisoners were beheaded; Li's brother escaped, wounded. Li humiliated and furious, ordered the Sungkiang force to advance immediately. So it did, beginning the attack, April 30, and completing the capture of Taitsang, May 2, with more than 122 casualties.

With the capture of Taitsang completed, Gordon was again anxious to resume fighting, to avoid a letdown in the force's morale. This, he feared, would be the end result of all the wild looting and disorderly behavior of his men enjoying the fruits of victory.

34 Cf. Li, Memoirs, 61-62, for account of a local hsien-kuan's entreaties to Li to remove Gordon's men before Taitsang became "stripped dry as a fishbone."
Late in May, the force departed for Kunshan, whose capture Gordon executed with characteristic skill and ingenuity. The description of the battle, oft recounted, is one of the most fascinating gems of the Gordon episode in China. Gordon's own report hardly withstands retelling; it must be read in the original, but a partial account follows. Kunshan, some fifteen miles from Soochow, remained one of the large centers of rebel resistance in the Shanghai 30-mile limits area. Actually, it was some two miles inside the perimeter. In addition, the city had become the one arsenal manufactory of the whole T'ai-p'ing t'ien-kuo. A dangerous projection into the Shanghai radius defense, Kunshan strengthened the insurgent hold on the Potung peninsula, and re-enforced considerably the position of rebel-held Soochow. Together these positions straddled the Grand Canal, resembling a mighty hook, secured entirely too close to the European settlement. A unique geographical terrain had reduced the line of communication between Soochow and Shanghai to an only road, upon which an important and commanding position was held by a small village, Chunye. Following closely the land-road, rather deep creeks provided boat transportation. With Taitsang now in Imperialist hands, any northern exit for the Kunshan garrison was impossible.

The only route of retreat lay along the one road to Soochow, the main center of rebel resistance.

36 General Ch'eng had already moved troops up to Kunshan. However, instead of accomplishing a siege, his troops had become, in turn, besieged by a covering force of insurgents, so Gordon's arrival constituted a rescue operation. Ch'eng had attacked the city from its eastern side. Gordon determined the western side, the side facing Soochow, to be more vulnerable. He consequently seized the small town of Chunye, which gave him a commanding position on the line of retreat. Now an armed steamer, the Hyson, was brought into play, sailing up and down the creeks along the Soochow-Kunshan road. The result was to throw the Kunshan garrison into complete confusion, while the small forces under Gordon maintained a continuous, punishing fire. With their only retreat covered, the Taiping forces lost heavily; Kunshan fell June 1, 1863. Gordon seems now to

36 Ch'eng Hsieh-ch'i, 程學啟, frequently referred to as Chen or Ching papers and nineteenth century in parliamentary secondary accounts.

37 Morse, 2:96.

38 Boulger, 89.

39 A Chinese scholar, an informed authority, gives the credit for this to General Ch'eng: "Fighting again in cooperation with Charles George Gordon...Ch'eng conquered T'ai-t'ou (May 2), Kun-shan (May 31), and other strategic points, and outworks in the vicinity of Soochow." Cf. Teng Ssu-yii, "Ch'eng Hsieh-ch'i", article in Hummel, 1:115-116.
have proposed to make Kunshan the new headquarters of the Ever-Victorious Army. This hardly suited Ch'eng who seems to have felt his position at the East gate, the most formidable of the rebel positions, was the deciding factor in the capture of Kunshan. He, consequently, felt that the city was his. Cheng's jealous attitude and Gordon's sensitivity and bad temper inevitably led to friction, culminating, finally, in an attack by Ch'eng's men on Gordon's troops. Gordon, infuriated, threatened immediate retaliation, but this was fortunately avoided by the prompt arrival of Dr. Macartney with a peace message from Li Hung Chang. Ch'eng is said to have offered his apologies, and Gordon retained Kunshan.

General Brown, Her Majesty's Commander of the regular British troops in China, determined now to give full overt support to the Ever-Victorious Army, and Imperialist armies at Kunshan and Taitsang respectively. General Brown had

40 Morse, 2:97.
41 Boulger, 88.
42 Li, Memoirs.
43 Macartney was a British physician who had actually resigned his commission (before the Order in Council was issued) in order to serve in the Chinese Imperialist forces.
44 Wilson, Ever-Victorious Army, as cited in Morse, 2:97 (footnote 33); Boulger, 88-89. Boulger has written a biography of Halliday Macartney.
45 General Brown succeeded General Stavely, who had recently resigned because of ill health.
46 Brown to Forster, June 5, 1863, CL2957, 111.
already given direct aid at Taitsang by holding "a field force, acting in conjunction, as a support, moving on the extreme edge of our boundary, at Wy-con-sin and its proximity, within some three or four miles of Tai-tsan, which was of great assistance to Major Gordon in his operations." (Italics supplied). H.M.'s commander, General Brown decided that, "as the Footae (...i.e., Li) intends to make Tai-tsan his head-quarters, I shall bring it within the boundary, thus giving the Imperialists every confidence to hold it, knowing that they could receive support from me at any moment. The distance from Shanghae is not more than twenty-eight miles; and, I think, it will make our boundary more complete and stronger as a position. (Italics supplied.) In this General Brown was, technically at least, not over-stepping the bounds of his instructions.

With Kunshan withdrawn from the insurgent grip, it remained to clear the vicinity of Soochow of remaining rebel garrisons, north, east and south for a final massed assault

47 Loc. cit. The force consisted of: 60 Royal Artillery; 80 Lascars; 2 Howitzers; 2 5½-inch mortars; 30 31st Regiment; 150 Beloochees; 150 5th Bombay Native Infantry.

48 Loc. cit.

49 The predominantly northeastern position which Soochow bears to Lake T'ai (T'ai-Hu) is noteworthy here. Gordon's strategy included the use of armed steamers for the south-western approaches to the city.
on that city, itself. The campaigns from the fall of Kunshan to the surrender of Soochow may be conveniently summarized as such clearing and mopping up operations.
CHAPTER IV

The Burgevine episode as a Reflection of British Policy
A consideration of the Burgevine episode and its relation to British policy may now seem a propos. Burgevine, who had been forced out as commander of the Ward force, through the determination of Li Hung-chang, had pressed his case at Peking, seeking to gain reinstatement. Burgevine seems to have been a sort of "soldiers' general", exceedingly popular with his men, but more than that, he had continued the Ward adventurer tradition. Both Ward and Burgevine, while good organizers and splendid soldiers, were, nonetheless, basically, mercenaries. This was in full contradistinction to the professional, efficient and essentially military Victorianism of Gordon, for Gordon was a career officer in H.M.'s forces. In keeping with the practice of mercenary bands, both Ward and Burgevine openly encouraged looting, plundering and freedom of the city after each successful campaign. This was part of the incentive, in addition to the pay, which drew all of the worst elements of Shanghai and the vagabonds of the Pacific coast. But to Chinese patriots, such as Li Hung-chang and Tseng Kuo-fan, the use of these European-led groups could be
justified on the grounds of *expediency*, only. Chinese leadership would allow for the misbehavior of the Europeans, for after all in few respects were the Imperialists any different in their respect for human life. But a much more serious and practical consideration existed -- the payment of troops. Chinese might be forced to serve; Europeans served voluntarily. Peking's purse strings were drawn quite securely. Provincial governors generally collected taxes and revenues independently of the central government for China's polity had long since degenerated into a vicious kind of autonomous localism inherently incompatible with the conduct of a full scale anti-Taiping suppression campaign. With this in mind,

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1 Li, *Memoirs*, (undated entry), 58-59. "And it makes hair grow still on my neck to know that because of the emergencies constantly arising we are obliged to put up with it.... \( \cdots \) i.e., the arrogant behavior of Europeans."

2 *Ibid.*, 52. Li's own conception of the worth of human life is startlingly revealed in an entry dated December 12, 1859. He had recently ordered the execution of several of his own men, for allegedly having killed a pair of civilians, who, by coincidence, happened to be Li's old schoolmates. The entry reads: "I do not like to lose good soldiers, especially at this time, but three or four, more or less, will not be noticed much."


it is not difficult to understand the constant financial difficulties faced by provincial governors-general such as Li, upon whom the burden of the campaign fell, but this was still viewed in Peking as a sort of local provincial rebellion.

Indeed, even the British frequently viewed it as such.

For Gordon, non-payment meant little, since he was a half-pay Royal Engineer, volunteering his services. Burgevine, however, depended entirely on payments from the Chinese, as did most of the Europeans in the force. Consequently, payment became a frequently contested issue. During periods of delayed payment, the force became sulky, disgruntled, and finally, mutinous. The situation was even further aggravated by Gordon's prohibition of unlimited plunder and looting privileges. This situation coupled with non-payment brought back memories of the old Ward-Burgevine days. As Gordon has put it, "Ward spoilt them."

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5 This is most evidenced by the peculiar situation during the years 1858-1862. While British and French forces mobilized at Shanghai for the invasion of north China, local, top rank Chinese provincial officials asked European aid against the rebels. — J.C.P. Bland and E. Backhouse, China Under the Empress Dowager, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1912), 65-66.

6 Gordon's private diary, cited in Morse, 2:97.
It was this issue of non-payment conjoined with Burgevine's stubborn and arrogant refusal to subordinate his command to the Chinese leadership that had culminated in the latter's dismissal. Burgevine's own testimony and the general tone of Li's memoirs would seem to indicate that that impulsive American adventurer was by no means the renegade as pictured in most conventional accounts. Burgevine, however, is in this discussion of importance only in his relation to British China policy.

7Statement by Burgevine, Jan. 10, 1863, [32957], 19.

8Loc. cit. Burgevine, after enumerating factors explaining his treatment, supposed that Li "has long been jealous of the growing power of the force, and it is his avowed intention to crush it, or else put a Chinese officer in command, over whom he would have unlimited control."

9Li, Memoirs, 55. Burgevine was actually dismissed on the pretext of refusing to participate in the Nanking campaign, then being conducted by Tseng Kuo-fan. Meanwhile, the Ward force remained at rest at Sungkiang. This "rest period" may have genuinely irritated Li. In this connection, one of the passages in Li's diary, which comments on a similar rest session earlier is quite enlightening:

"January 5, 1861. -- ... The 'Ever-Victorious Army' has been lying in idleness now for many days, and it may be necessary for me to assume personal command again. I would not care so much about several weeks or months of rest, for I have found that my own body has great pains and fatigue after all this campaigning; but while they are resting they eat more than during this fighting. When they are marching or engaged in battle, they are always on the lookout for food and drink, and they manage to get it somehow. But when they remain idle in big numbers, they get lazy and mutinous, and want the food brought to them. This alone requires the services of many extra men, and the expense of the food is hard to bear. Besides, when they are idle they are given to much excess and lawlessness upon their own accounts, and
Burgevine refused to consider his dismissal an accomplished fact. The situation was further aggravated by the action of the Chinese authorities over the Taki incident; the Chinese reprisal took the form of a man-hunt for Burgevine who had "disappeared", but had actually gone to Peking to protest to the Imperial authorities, and to gain the support of the American and British ministers. Burgevine's men, meanwhile, demonstrated their complete support and confidence in their former commander by signing a protest-declaration; among other things, they solemnly pledged themselves: "not to serve the Chinese authorities any longer" should they succeed in securing Burgevine's head.

10 Taki, the Chinese banker-paymaster of the Ward force had been struck in the face by Burgevine upon refusing the latter's demands for pay for the troops. Burgevine forcibly took the payments and distributed the money to his men. The Chinese never forgave him.


13 Loc. cit.
Concurrently, the news of disaffection in the Ever-Victorious Army had arrived in Peking; Bruce deeply regretted the Burgevine-Li impasse. He had not yet seen Burgevine, but was sure "that he was well fitted for the post." Holland's defeat at Taitsang (Feb. 15, 1863), following Burgevine's dismissal (Jan. 15, 1863) and the generally lowered morale of the Disciplined Forces \[\text{sic, E-V.}\] seem again to have thrown fears into the European settlement, for the safety of Shanghai. News of the January 9 Order in Council had already arrived. Thus, Bruce felt justified in writing to General Stavely, Commander of the British Army in China, the following:

"...it appears to me that the great amount of foreign property at Shanghai renders it desirable that this force should be commanded and officered by men who are not adventurers, and who afford a guarantee, by the position they occupy in the military service of their own country, that they are both competent and to be relied upon; otherwise we should be constituting a force which would be as dangerous to us as the insurgents themselves." \[15\]

Bruce suggested to General Stavely that a commander be chosen from among the non-treaty powers, to avoid jealousies. But at all costs the force should be maintained, for the security of Shanghai. Bruce also took the opportunity/impress on

\[14\] Bruce to Stavely, Mar. 12, 1863 [32927], 68.

\[15\] Loc. cit.
the general some prime tenets of British policy. Officers who volunteered for Chinese service would "bear a Chinese and not a British character, and Her Majesty's Government will not be responsible for the acts done by them in that capacity." British aid to the Chinese emperor "is at present, indirect, and based on our own, not on his, interests." 16 (Italics supplied)

Nearly a month later (April 10, 1863), H.M.'s Minister having been informed of the charges against Burgevine preferred by the Chinese authorities, and having Burgevine's own testimony delivered his judgment, one which completely exonerated the American. 17 Bruce considered the difficulties as stemming entirely from Chinese intrigues and jealousies directed against the Chinese drilled force, "against which he (...i.e., Li Hsun-chang) thought he might strike a first blow with safety on account of General Burgevine being an American." To insure the future security of foreign officers in the force, Bruce recommended Burgevine's reinstatement, "and that he should receive, as hitherto, every assistance from the officers of Her Majesty's service." (Italics supplied). Recognizing the awkward position of Major Gordon, the English Minister requested General Stavely to explain to Major Gordon that a personal slight was not intended, but rather the "pursuance of the general policy of seeing justice

16 Loc. cit.
17 Bruce to Stavely, April 10, 1863, J.32967, 80.
done to foreigners in the Chinese service to whatever nationality they belong." However, Major-General Brown who had recently succeeded to Stavely's command, could not accept Bruce's position with respect to Burgevine. It was now late, April 1863, and Gordon had done a remarkable job in reorganizing the Ever-Victorious Army, that rejuvenated force having broken the siege of Changshu. General Brown, after consulting with Li over Bruce's instructions, found the governor to be quite adamant. Burgevine would not be tolerated; Gordon must stay. With this Brown heartily concurred. Li now put into writing his own analysis of the whole Burgevine affair, a copy of which General Brown forwarded to Peking for Bruce's perusal. The governor stressed the exorbitant demands for money which Burgevine had made, which coupled with the force's generally disorderly conduct had made them anathema to the mandarins. Also, Gordon and the new British officers had revitalized the Ever-Victorious Army. Gordon especially, wished "to drill our troops and save our money... I cannot therefore remove him [sic, Gordon] without cause."

18 Loc. cit.
19 Brown to Lewis, April 22, 1863, [32957], 79.
20 Brown to Bruce, April 17, 1863, [32957], 85.
21 Medhurst to Bruce, Jan. 20, 1863, [32957], 26: ".... Ward from his position and power fell naturally into the mistake of interfering with the Civil authorities of the city, [...], Sungkiang and Burgevine endeavoured to maintain what Ward had gained."
22 Le, Footae, to Markham, April 24, 1863, [32957], 82-83.
General Brown now proceeded to reply to Bruce's remarks which had urged Burgevine's reinstatement. Her Majesty's General was not prepared to combat Bruce's reasons, "regarding them as purely political." However, "on military grounds I must be excused in taking a very different view, and leaving the affair entirely in the hands of the Chinese Governor." Brown freely admitted his own support of Gordon, "with whom I would have no hesitation at any time to co-operate in the field, but would pause ere I committed myself to make any movement in conjunction with a Chinese force not disciplined or under the control of a British commander." Brown expressed fear that Gordon's removal would mean the immediate resignation of those British half-pay officers now in the force; future volunteers from H.M.'s service would be discouraged. The force was now approaching a high state of military proficiency. It might conceivably become the nucleus for the formation of a large army. General Brown was certain that the force would be totally useless to the Chinese Government if it reverted to the control of adventurers, lacking in military skill "and having nothing whatever at stake." Significantly, the Foreign Office expressed its full agreement with General Brown on the expediency of continuing Major Gordon in command.

23 Brown to Bruce, April 17, 1863, \(32957\), 85.
24 Russel to Bruce, July 9, 1863, \(32957\), 86.
Without employment, bitter over his difficulties with the Chinese authorities, deeply in debt over supplies bought for the Ever-Victorious Army and charged to his personal name, Burgevine, finally, in desperation, determined to go over to the rebel cause. With him, (on August 2?) he took some 300 Europeans collected about the vicinity of Shanghai. A day later he is reputed to have kidnapped the Imperialist steamer "Ki-fow" which was taken to Soochow, that city being partially besieged by the government forces. Rumors flew wildly during the late summer of 1863. One of the British officers, fearful for the safety of Shanghai, insisted on detaining the 67th regiment for its defense. It was even reported that Major Gordon had been taken prisoner. It was not unknown that many of Gordon's own officers seriously contemplated joining Burgevine's new force.

On July 25, 1863 Major Gordon wrote General Brown that he had notified Li Hung-chang of his intention to resign. A portion of Gordon's communication to Li is quoted in extenso:

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25 Bruce to Russel, Sept. 9, 1863, [32957], 155-156.
26 Colonel Hough to Brown, Aug. 4, 1863, [32957], 127-128.
27 _Loc. cit._
28 Gordon to Brown, July 25, 1863, [32957], 128.
"In consequence of monthly difficulties I experience in getting the payment of the force made, the non-payment of legitimate bills for boat-hire and munitions of war from Her Britannic Majesty's Government, who have done so much for the Imperial Chinese authorities, I have determined on throwing up the command of this force, as my retention of office in these circumstances is derogatory to my position as a British officer who cannot be a suppliant for what your Excellency knows to be necessities and should only be too happy to give." 29

The payment problem which had ruined Burgevine now entrapped Gordon as well. This, conjoined with personal rivalries, jealousies, and generally petty squabbles with Li, Ch'eng, et al. had pretty well left Gordon in a thoroughly disgusted mood. Then, after Burgevine's removal, there remained behind a permanent ill-feeling in the force, not yet completely eradicated. Again, the Chinese authorities lacked a sense of military coordination, a cardinal sin to a professional soldier. As though this were not sufficient cause, a veritable cause celebre developed in the Shanghai foreign press over alleged eye-witness accounts that Imperialist authorities had tortured seven rebel prisoners at Taitsang. 31

29 Gordon to Futa, July 25, 1863, [32957], 128.

30 Cf. [32957], 108ff.

31 The Imperialists were accused of having applied an old Chinese torture, ling-t'zu 醜, a slow and ignominious death, meaning literally "cutting into a thousand pieces." Cf. Lt. Cane to D.A.A.G., June 11, 1863, [32957], 118.
The case reached enormous proportions, being brought to the attention of Earl Russel, by the Bishop of Victoria. Major-General Brown, Major Gordon and other British apologists found themselves conducting a newspaper correspondence proclaiming the reports grossly exaggerated. There is little doubt that Gordon was ready to leave China; hence his formal resignation. However, news of Burgevine's latest position with the insurgents at Soochow raised the spectre of all the officers of the Ward force going over as well. Gordon returned to resume command.

Acting Consul Markham at Shanghai seems to have been able to gain the Fut'ai's promise to pay up the force in arrears, which he hoped would "put Major Gordon more at his ease." But conditions within the force remained bad. Gordon determined temporarily to remove all the siege guns and ammunition from Kunshan to Shanghai. He was now without staff, and the force was in a much weakened condition. Both Gordon's men and the Imperialist troops had lost the offensive. Consequently, there were renewed fears for the security of Shanghai and vicinity. Major-General Brown

32Boulger, 89.
33Markham to Bruce, Aug. 11, 1863, $\underline{32957}$, 129-130.
34Gordon to Cane, Aug. 7, 1863, $\underline{32957}$, 130-131.
35Bruce to Russel, Sept. 9, 1863, $\underline{32957}$, 155-156.
36British regulars and allied units garrisoned Taitsang during this tense period. The force "consisted of half a
felt keenly, at the time, the seriously delimiting prohibitions of the 30-mile radius. He expressed concern over the future and safety of Major Gordon "and the still greater responsibility of the number of guns and munitions of war in his possession, furnished to the Fut'ai at the express sanction of the British Government." If the situation worsened, it might be necessary to depart from the 30-mile limit policy "and to sanction officers as volunteers joining the Ward force, to lend every support to Major Gordon, granting them at the same time their full pay, in order to obtain their services." With a reduced force at Shanghai, and the heaviest artillery in Major Gordon's force it would be most critical if the rebels succeeded in capturing these heavy guns, since they would now possess heavier ordnance than even the British regulars. Under such circumstances the danger to Shanghai might be grave, indeed. General Brown hoped he might "be justified in calling on Her Majesty's Government to support me in every way." The Foreign Office responded favorably; Earl Russel agreed "that under present circumstances, British officers on full pay should be allowed to join the force under Major Gordon's command and to

battery of Royal Artillery, 300 Beloochee Native Infantry, 400 Kingsley's Anglo-Chinese, and 400 Franco-Chinese, under the command of Captain Murray, R.A." - Captain Strod to Vice-Admiral Kuper, Aug. 12, 1863, [32957], 152.

37 Brown to de Grey and Ripon, Sept, 3, 1863, [32957], 153-154.
serve beyond the 30-mile radius." Significantly, copies of these new instructions were sent both to the War Department and to Bruce, British Minister to Peking.

By the middle of September the military situation seems to have improved considerably. General Brown's visits of inspection to the position of both Gordon (at Kunshan) and General Ch'eng (posted a mile and a half east of Soochow) convinced him of the excellent condition of the troops and of their morale. H.M. 's General counseled both commanders to maintain a defensive strategy and await developments. It was as yet uncertain whether the naval flottilla under Commodore S. Osborne would arrive "to act in suppressing the rebellion."

Brown informed the War Office that Burgevine, now commanding a large force at Soochow, was counting on Gordon's inability to move out in full force, "deeming my [Brown's] instructions so binding that I could not venture out to his support, and in time [Burgevine] might be able to subdue the garrison, and then move on to Shanghai." Since Kun-shan contained a hill permitting a view of thirty miles of the surrounding countryside, its importance could not be underestimated. General Brown determined consequently to

38 Russel to Bruce, Nov. 10, 1863, 32957, 154.
strengthen Gordon's force with 200 Beloochees. The General suggested hopefully that the War Office would approve this latest departure from his instructions. The War Office seems to have been less anxious to justify General Brown's departure from official policy than the Foreign Office. It was felt that the dispatch of 200 Beloochees was to be preferred over General Brown's earlier proposal to send full-pay British officers to the Chinese force. The War Office cautioned "Major-General Brown at the same time to adhere to the orders hitherto in force for regulating the terms on which British officers are allowed to take service under the Chinese Government." However, officers wishing to volunteer for half-pay service under Gordon were to be encouraged.

On receipt of the contents of this new cautionary advisement, the Foreign Office immediately concurred in the opinion of the War Office, expressing itself in nearly identical terms: that Major-General Brown's course was approved, but he must be instructed not to violate the thirty-mile radius, except in similar exigencies.

It may be appropriate at this juncture to complete the Burgevine narrative. On September 28, Major Gordon and his

40 *Loc. cit.*

41 Major-General Crofton to Hammond, Nov. 17, 1863, 32927, 156-157.

42 Hammond to Crofton, Nov. 25, 1863, 32927, 158.
men successfully attacked and captured the Paotai Chiao stockade, distant only some 2,500 yards from Soochow on its south east side. Such proximity to the rebel-held city made possible a series of secret negotiations between Burgevine and some of his European followers and Gordon. As a result some twenty-six of these men succeeded in surrendering, the majority of whom Gordon absorbed into his own bodyguard. Burgevine, however, found it impossible to come at this time. The circumstances of his final "surrender" or capture are not entirely clear since Burgevine has been much maligned by contemporaries and later historians of the period for his alleged betrayal of the Imperialist cause. What is certain is that after Burgevine appeared, the Chinese immediately arrested him and under pressure delivered him to the American consul, who assured the Chinese authorities he would send Burgevine away from China on the next boat.

43 Markham to Bruce, Oct. 16, 1863, 32957, 164-165.
44 See especially 32957, 164-184 and more especially, Statement by Burgevine 32957, 177-179; Le, Futai, to Markham, Nov. 18, 1863, 32957, 183-184.
45 Le, Futai to Markham, Nov. 18, 1863, 32957, 183-184.
46 Loc. cit. Li expressed skepticism about this. "The American consul, however, has repeatedly given his promise to take a step of this kind, and yet he has never been found to take any real action. His wish is undoubtedly to screen Burgevine, but his motives cannot be divined."
Burgeonine eventually left China for Japan, remaining there only a short time, but soon returning to rejoin the Taiping cause. However, he was again captured by the Chinese, arrested, and according to his guards, "accidentally drowned."

The Burgevine incident, nevertheless, is most valuable for the light which it throws on questions of basic British China policy. When, as shown earlier, General Brown felt that because of Burgevine's disaffection and Gordon's temporary resignation it might be necessary to depart from the official 30 mile limits policy about Shanghai, H.M.'s minister Sir F. Bruce seized the occasion to warn General Brown "that Her Majesty's Government would have the greatest difficulty in supporting an officer who placed his troops in a position which led to a collision with the Taepings beyond the radius." It was not the business of the British to suppress the rebels. "Our exclusive business at Shanghai," wrote Bruce, "is to protect the port and thirty-mile radius round it; and this we do, not from affection for the Chinese Government, but because we are afraid of great prejudice to our interests were the disorderly Taeping hordes to seize Shanghai." The British Government's friendship for the

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47Bruce to Brown, Oct. 6, 1863, [32957], 163. The remainder of the paragraph is taken from this dispatch, a singularly lucid exposition of British policy in the Tai-p'ing rebellion.
Chinese Government extended only to assistance in organizing military and naval units to reestablish order. The operations of forces commanded by half-pay English officers could not be assisted by the British regulars nor by loans of artillery -- not "on any pretext." Bruce's final comments must be reproduced in toto as bearing on immediate future policy:

"The situation of Europe is very critical; and unless the Chinese Government shows itself disposed to take up military re-organization vigorously, and to treat with confidence and in a proper manner, the foreign officials it employs, I feel certain that the disposition of Her Majesty's Government to keep clear of complications in China will increase; and in point of policy, the most effectual means of assisting the Chinese is to throw them entirely on their own resources. If they want guns, ammunition, &c., let them buy them; and if they do not support their foreign officers, let these officers resign at once. No good can result from Major Gordon's submitting to improper treatment, and putting up with lukewarm support." 48

Thus the limited aspects of British policy are revealed in the refusal to sanction readily any departures from Foreign Office instructions concerning the defense of the treaty ports. Britain's interest in China was emphatically self-interest; it was not the business of H.M.'s forces in China

48 loc. cit.
to suppress the rebels. The knotty questions of non-payment of foreign mercenaries and private supply firms, the constant personnel tensions between foreign officers and Chinese—all these would constitute, as shown later, convenient pretexts for the Foreign Office to extricate itself from the China mess.
CHAPTER V

Affaire Soochow
The city of Soochow, some sixty miles from Shanghai, 
with walls twelve miles in circumference, continued to be a bastian of insurgent power. Once a thriving community of over a million it was now reduced to a fourth of that, due in part to the incessant fighting and the constant flight of the populace in the wake of the rebel armies. The city is noted throughout Chinese history as a great cultural and literary center, and it was once even the capital of the kingdom of Wu during the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. Soochow, a textile center today, was a silk entrepot in the 19th century. Although modern geographers place Soochow about 12 miles from the banks of the T'ai lake (T'ai-hu 太湖) it was during the mid-19th century practically on the banks of that body of water, hence its accessibility by small steamers, one of the attack techniques which Gordon seems to have readily employed.

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Evidently the British seem to have looked at Soochow as the stopping place in the Taiping rebellion. Shortly before its capture, Bruce wrote to Gordon, "Our interest is that Soo-chow be re-taken and the silk-districts and line of the Imperial Canal cleared. Tseng Kwo-fan and his own people may take Nanking, if they can singlehanded." Soochow, however, was not so easily taken as some of the neighboring villages and hamlets of the Potung peninsula. Gordon's force, apparently never over 3-4000 men in strength, continued to clear small neighboring garrisons and stockades in conjunction with Ch'eng's forces in relatively small encounters. In addition, several small armed steamers were brought almost to the city's walls on its southwestern frontage to the T'ai lake. The total Chinese and Anglo-Chinese forces now formed a kind of siege or chain around Soochow, gradually tightening and leaving but one rebel retreat -- along the Grand Canal leading northwest in the direction of Nanking. By the third week of November the Soochow siege had begun in earnest with direct bombardments of the eastern gates. The rebel forces in the city proper are said to have contained upwards of 40,000 troops, with a movable column of close to 20,000 between Soochow and neighboring Wu-hsi (towards Nanking on the Grand Canal) with at least that many garrisoning Wu-hsi. The

3Bruce to Gordon, Nov. 22, 1867, $34087$, 4.

4Morse, 2:99.
imperialist siege armies consisted of Gordon's men at normal strength as cited elsewhere, Ch'eng's units with about 10,000 men and the army under Li Hung-chang's brother, said to total over 25,000 troops. Thus some 38,000 Imperialists held nearly 80,000 rebels at bay, a numerical superiority in the insurgent's favor of over two to one. However, there appears little doubt that, by and large, the Imperialists possessed a larger portion of trained disciplined units, bolstered by superior artillery, and perhaps the comforting thought that if things took a serious turn, the British regulars under General Brown, would come to the rescue. An unsuccessful assault, followed two days later (Nov. 29) by the capture of several outer stockades drew the siege a bit closer, but basically the military situation remained unchanged. As for a determined attack by the besiegers, the rebels appeared to be in a rather firm defensive position. The siege of Soochow might become a long-protracted campaign. This was not to be the case, however. Inside the rebel strong-hold defeatism and dissension seems to have

Figures are all approximations based on Morse, 2:99-100, supplemented by statistics in the China papers 32927, 34087 et passim.

There were of course the Franco-Chinese contingents, numbering 400-1000 men. French intervention is, however, a separate study in itself.

Morse, 2:100.
seized the insurgent hierarchy.

The Chung Wang 段，the Taiping commander-in-chief had left Soochow (Dec. 1, 1863) to confer with Hung Hsiu-ch'üan on ordering a general retreat from Nanking south. He may have had in mind also to move his force to Changchow and thus attack the Imperialist forces from the rear. In his place, the Chung Wang placed the Mu Wang 朱 as the first in command. However Soochow's position becoming increasingly serious, the other Wangs had decided on outright surrender. In the absence of their chief they now carried on secret pourparlers with agents of the Imperialist forces. On the morning of Nov. 28, General Ch'eng informed Major Gordon that one of the rebel Wangs had initiated negotiations for the surrender of the city. This insurgent chieftain and the Na Wang, as well as three chiefs, thirty-five Tien Chuangs, and three quarters of the Soochow force were prepared to come over; they controlled four of the city's six gates. General Ch'eng asked for Gordon's judgement. "I told him that with

6 Li Hsiu-ch'eng, 李秀成
9 Hummel, 1:459-463.
10 T' an Shao-kuang 譚紹洸
11 Memorandum, Substance of Gordon's Reports on Soochow 734087, 11. The account is primarily based on Gordon's report. Where there seem to be discrepancies, Li's and other accounts are integrated and will be so noted.
the small force at our disposal it would be a far safer mode to induce them to surrender than if we had to storm the city, the success of which might be doubtful." Ch'eng then disclosed the rebels' plan of surrender. The only chieftain who insisted on fighting to the last ditch was the Mu Wang. The other Wangs therefore requested that the Imperialists renew the attack immediately. The Mu Wang would then venture out of the city with his own men alone, whereupon the others would prevent his reentry. This diabolical scheme, however, resulted in a complete fiasco. The Mu Wang ventured out to meet the new assault, but the sudden return of the Chung Wang, prevented the other Wangs from shutting the city's gates. As suddenly as he had arrived, the Chung Wang departed (Dec. 1, 1863), and the secret negotiations were resumed. After several clandestine meetings attended by the Na Wang and Gordon, General Ch'eng Hsüeh-ch'i and Colonel Ch'eng Kuo-Kuei, an oral agreement resulted that in return for presenting the head of the Chung Wang to the Imperialists, the Taiping chiefs would receive second-class military commissions in the government forces.

However, for the future of this discussion, it should be noted that Major Gordon, by his own admission did not attend the actual surrender arrangements. This was arranged by

12 鄭國泰

13 Hummel, 1:115-116.
General Ch'eng, in whom Gordon seems now to have had complete confidence. "I may remark," wrote Major Gordon, "that the Imperialists in their negotiations hitherto with the rebels had always kept faith, and the mandarin camps were full of rebel chiefs who had given in their allegiance. I had therefore no suspicion that the Imperialists would not keep perfect faith in this instance." Gordon, nevertheless, went to see Governor Li and told him that the rebels must be shown mercy and leniency.

Meanwhile, dissension amidst the inner councils of the insurgent Wangs had divided the leadership into three parties. The Chung Wang, who made frequent inspection tours between Nanking and Soochow, proposed to evacuate both Nanking and Soochow. At Nanking, Hung Hsiu Ch'iüan had opposed leaving his capital, preferring to trust in God. And at Soochow, the Mu Wang stoutly refused to leave as he owned considerably property here and both his parents lived at Nanking. Nor did the remaining Wangs greet the idea warmly,

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14 This observation seems, hardly consistent with the history of the Imperialists' treatment of rebel prisoners. While many rebels had been absorbed, some such as Shih Ta K'ai had been rather brutally executed under slightly similar circumstances. - Cf. Hummel, 2:655-658.

15 Morse, 2:100.

16 Tseng Kuo-fan had been steadily tightening the siege at the Taiping capital.

17 Hummel, 1:459-462.
as they had already determined to surrender.

On the 4th of December at 11 o'clock the Wangs assembled at the Mu Wang's headquarters to plan further actions. During the course of the ensuing heated discussions, the Mu Wang delivered an angry tirade against the faithlessness of certain rebel elements, other than the original Kwangsi-Canton men. Hot arguments followed, until finally "the Kong Wang got up and took off his robe, and going forward stabbed the Mu Wang, who immediately fell, and one of the Tien Chuang cut off his head. The head of the Mu Wang was afterwards sent out to General Ching [Ch'eng]." The following night many rebels shaved their heads, as a sign of Imperialist allegiance. The next day some of the Cantonese die-hard began registering opposition to the contemplated surrender, but the Na Wang's men forced them out of Soochow, at the same time slaughtering a number of them. Immediately after, Ch'eng and Gordon advanced their men towards the city's gates. Gordon seems now to have feared the results of idleness on his men, the battle being over. Consequently, he proposed to march on to Wu hsi and Changchow.

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18 Europeans and other deserters of the rebel camp constantly arrived at Imperial headquarters to report such specific intelligence.

19 Rebels were frequently referred to as "ch'ang maos" or long hairs.
In effect, Gordon would leave the rich plum of Soochow for the Imperialist troops to plunder; his own men were to be denied this privilege. This denial of looting privileges to the Chinese Disciplined Forces was distinctly that British officer's innovation, in contradistinction to the Ward-Burgevine tradition. Gordon, consequently, proposed to Li that he "give the men two months' pay as a present stating that since I had taken the command they had received no reward, though they had recaptured a great many places and had had very hard and continuous training." To Li's strenuous objections, Gordon replied that unless at least one month's pay was given he would not be able to keep them under control. One month's pay was finally granted, but Major Gordon found himself forcing the men to accept it for some of the troops, dissatisfied with this paltry bonus, wanted to march on the Governor's headquarters.

The available evidence would seem to indicate much right in Gordon's position on the payment issue. The unparalleled rapidity of movement which characterized the operations of the E.-V.A. depended of course on efficient transportation-communication supply lines. This very real problem of logistics Major Gordon had solved by employing

20 Markham to Li, Aug. 8, 1863, 32927, 139-140.
the services of a private shipping firm, Messrs. Wheeloch and Co., Shanghai merchants. The firm had supplied boats for the transport of men and supplies for Gordon's troops. They seem to have been quite reliable; an auditing of the company's books demonstrated that they had not over-charged the Chinese authorities, a truly unique situation, since, notoriously, Shanghai had its share of war-profiteers. On presenting its bills for payment to the Chinese officials, however, these latter delayed, stalled, and generally refused to consider the payment. Out of sheer exasperation, Messrs. Wheeloch and Co. finally determined to withdraw their boats in Gordon's service. Gordon seriously considered resigning at this time (late summer 1863), intentions not entirely given up, and as recounted elsewhere, only Burgevine's disaffection and the problem of his own force frustrated these plans. Gordon's position seems from this time to have been taken for granted as temporary only, his wish being to resign as soon as possible; in fact, he seems to have already determined on Dr. Halliday Macartney as his successor.

21 Loc. cit. Actually the company under-charged, their charges for "the transport of artillery have been precisely the same as those made for common lighterage in this port (...i.e., Shanghai)."

22 Loc. cit.

23 Bruce to Russel, Oct. 13, 1863, [32957], 162-163.

24 Boulger, 104-105. It should be noted that Macartney was not actually a member of Gordon's force.
There is some conclusive evidence that Li Hung-chang had actually promised Gordon a reward for his men after the capture of Soochow, as revealed in the following passage culled from the governor's diary:

"Gordon thinks of nothing but money these days, and demands coin of me as if I were the god of gold and silver. He says the men will not fight any more unless they are paid. I tell him that as soon as Suchow is in our hands there will be funds sufficient to pay all arrears and some good bounty. This is the word that I have from the Viceroy, and his promises come from the Throne." 25

In all fairness to the Chinese authorities it should be pointed out, however, that the foreign officers seem to have bought supplies without directly consulting Li, et.al. The Imperialists lived off the land hardly less than the insurgents. Gordon frustrated the looting propensities of his men and determined to give his force a real supply system. It may be that the Chinese felt these additional expenses unnecessary, and perhaps felt that on the basis of past performances they were being excessively overcharged.

Nor did they ever quite overcome their basic distrust of the foreigners. Li, for example, sometimes suspected that the "yang kuei tzu" 26 are often at the bottom of such troubles

25Li, Memoirs, 64.

26洋鬼子 ("foreign devils").
as this, \( \sqrt{\ldots} \) ie., the T.P. rebellion, because it proclaimed itself as a Christian movement\footnote{Li, Memoirs, 54.} that they may be given a good excuse for stepping in and making claim for their nations on account of their aid?" Tseng Kuo-fan following the same reasoning had expressed the wish that since the foreigners' religion had started the trouble, it might be well if they lost a few thousand soldiers in ending it.\footnote{Loc. cit. Also, Cf. Hail, 255-258, \textit{et passim}.} 

There is one further issue to be developed in connection with this general lack of cooperation between the imperialists and the British officered forces. The natural proclivity of the British regulars to protect Shanghai had, as has been shown, developed the need for a third force to operate beyond the 30-mile limits area. This need had been supplied rather inadequately by the E.-V.A. but had finally been filled by the advent of Gordon and other regular English officers. The force, however, remained a small aggressive striking army, fulfilling in some respects the functions of World War II commando units. Essentially Gordon's men could not garrison large cities or even take them without additional artillery flank and rear support. This last the British regulars might fulfill if the Disciplined force did not go too far beyond the Shanghai radius. Consequently there must
have been considerable reluctance to move up too far on the part of the British officers. The Chinese, of course, were not unaware of this orientation, which may have been a decisive factor in their attitude towards the force. While the central authorities at Peking may have desired to send the E.-V.A. all over China, the provincial authorities, on the other hand, for personal, prestige and other factors, were reluctant to do so. Tseng Kuo-fan, for example, had determined that the capture of Nanking would be a Chinese operation, and he therefore refused foreign help.

Nonetheless, the Peking authorities had been anxious to build up the foreign disciplined army groups. As a matter of fact, this was the reason for naming the Ward force the Ever-Victorious Army. Such a name was calculated to encourage Chinese enlistments. And Peking fully expressed its determination to control the force to H.M.'s Minister Sir F. Bruce as follows:

"Where British troops are engaged in protecting the mercantile community at one of the ports, these being troops placed there by the British Government, which objects to their moving away from

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29 Cf. Prince Kung to Bruce, June 19, 1863, 34067, 2-3.
30 Hummel, 2:751-756.
31 Ch'ang Sheng Chiin, 常勝軍
32 Hummel, 1:459-463.
the port, the co-operation of such troops against any rebels that may approach the port, rests entirely with the foreign Government. These troops, not being in Chinese pay, nor subject to Chinese control, the Chinese Government has certainly no right to direct their movements, nor has it anything to say to their discipline.

"This there can be no question about. But when the Chinese Government purchases vessels and guns, and appoints a high officer to take command of them, the foreign military officers, whom it may engage to assist in the instruction of its forces, inasmuch as these are in the pay of the Government, cannot limit their services to action against the enemy only at the ports of trade. Their movements and the distribution of them must be entirely under the direction of the Chinese Government." 33

All of the above factors were at work during the period of semi-official British-Chinese cooperation. They must be kept in mind if one is to avoid the confusion and nonsense that has come down to us in a whole maze of secondary accounts, each quoting its predecessor and culminating, finally, in a concatenation of falsities and misconceptions. The sum total effect has not been dissimilar in the resulting treatment of this rather narrow slice of history than has been elsewhere. It has been necessary therefore to ignore many secondary accounts so far as reliability is concerned, except in the case of letters, diaries, or other similar materials unavail-

33 Prince Kung to Bruce, June 19, 1863, 34067, 2-3.
able in the writing of this paper. While the parliamentary correspondence per se is not, either, the basis for a definitive appraisal of Britain's China policy, it is at least official and can be resorted to fruitfully for examining official British policy. How it operated is another question. Part of the answer it is hoped will be found in these pages.

A return to the events at Soochow is now necessary to relate the narrative to some chronological sequence. After Gordon had succeeded in gaining the promise of one month's extra pay for his men (in lieu of looting privileges), he ordered them to march back to Kunshan (Dec. 6). Gordon relates that at this time he learned that at 12 noon, the Wangs who had manipulated the surrender were to make their official exit from the city on the way to the governor's headquarters. Major Gordon then dropped by the Na Wang's house to determine for his own satisfaction if everything was proceeding as planned. Satisfied that such was the case, he then left for the city's East Gate, where on arrival a large crowd was seen assembled near the stockade headquarters of

34 Mem., Gordon's Report, 34087, 7-11.

35 Li Hsiu-ch'eng (the Chung Wang) had meanwhile placed some of his own forces near Changchow in order to strike the Imperialists in the rear. Upon learning of the surrender, Li left immediately for Nanking. — Cf. Hummel, 1:459-463.
General Ch'eng and Li Hung-chang. This presumably was the official surrender ceremony. Suddenly, the Imperialists came rushing through the gate, firing their rifles in the air and yelling. "I remonstrated with the mandarins and soldiers," Gordon writes "as their conduct was liable to frighten the rebels and cause them to create a disturbance." Shortly afterwards General Ch'eng arrived, looking quite pale. Gordon asked about the Wangs and their interview with Li. Ch'eng replied rather evasively, that they had not seen the Fu't'ai, that "they might have run away." Ch'eng now related that he had heard that the Na Yang sent word to the Fu't'ai that they (...i.e., the Wangs) must retain 20,000 of their men, and half of Soochow, that formerly they wanted 2,500 troops, then none at all, etc. The sum and substance of Ch'eng's behavior was to indicate to Gordon that something had gone wrong. All further queries about the Wangs received polite but absurd, evasive, and forced replies.

It was not until the following day (Dec. 7) that Gordon learned from an English officer commanding Ch'eng's artillery, that the Wangs had been beheaded. The artilleryman also added that General Ch'eng was not respon-

36 General Bailey, loaned by the British to the Imperialists. His rank appears to have been lower in his own unit.
sible for this, "that the Footae had ordered him (...i.e., Ch'eng) to execute the Wangs, and had ordered the troops to plunder." Gordon, now learned the location of the bodies of the executed Wangs; he found them "gashed and cut down the middle." Gordon added that he imagined Li and Ch'eng had arranged the whole affair for the "other mandarins entirely

Teng Ssu-yii takes the view that Ch'eng and not Li was responsible. Ch'eng feared the difficulties of controll-
ing 20,000 rebels without first liquidating their leadership. Li is said to have refused to consider executing the Wangs until urged on by General Ch'eng.

The murder was quite well planned, according to this authority. The Wangs were invited to a banquet, entertained in Li's presence, and when the governor departed the ill-
fated chieftains were executed. On the basis of Gordon's account, eye-witness testimonials, and finally, Li's own official statements, and diary entries, Teng's analysis appears the most plausible.


For accounts leaning to Gordon's point of view consult:
\[32957, 185-198 \text{ (passim)}, \sqrt{34087}, \text{inclosures 2-7 in No. 2, 5-13; inclosure 9 in No. 2, 14-16; inclosure 1 in No. 3, 14-16.}\]

For accounts expressing Li's point of view, see:
\[\sqrt{34087}, \text{Hart to Bruce, 25-29; inclosure 2 in No. 7, 19; Proclamation by Li, 16; Prince Kung to Bruce, 13-14.}\]

Li, Memoirs, 67-71. (Li's own diary does not particu-
larly place his behavior in a favorable light).
condemned the proceedings.

Gordon was so infuriated at what seemed to him an outrageous piece of treachery that he determined to arrest Li Hung Chang. Li, however, could not be found, and Gordon sent an angry letter to the governor via Macartney. Macartney, however, never translated nor conveyed its full contents out of sympathy for Li. The latter's response to Gordon's outburst was that he (...ie., Li) would take full responsibility for the whole affair: "But also tell Gordon," Li is reputed to have said, "that this is China, not Europe."

38 To show his intense disapproval of his superiors' act Colonel Ch'eng Kuo-K'uei who had participated in the negotiations with the murdered Wangs) refused to eat or work for three days." -- Hummel, 1:115-116.

Interestingly enough, the Ch'ing legal code contained a statute, long since become a dead letter, which expressly prohibited the execution of surrendered prisoners. An English translation follows: "If any such commanding officer rapaciously plunders the property of those who have voluntarily surrendered, and subsequently kills or wounds them; or if he oppresses them in such a manner that they are driven to desert, and either attempt or effect their escape, he shall be beheaded after remaining in prison the customary period." -- Cf. George T. Staunton, trans., Ta Tsing Leu Lee, (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1810), CC:210-211.

39 Morse, 2:103. But Gordon implies that he merely wanted to frighten the Fu'tai. Cf. 292, Mem., 186-189.

40 Boulger, 106. Boulger's account is based on the Macartney papers.

41 Loc. cit. Boulger presents complete conversations, as though they had been taken down by recorders. While, obviously this is for literary reasons, apparently, the kernestalt has been retained.
Gordon, still in a state of fury, at the sacrifice of his personal honor determined to give the whole affair full publicity, and subsequently wrote a complete narrative for the Shanghai press. This is the most violent diatribe of the several papers in the parliamentary accounts. Its finale, however, reveals a clue to some of the reasons for all the excitement. Gordon writes that he has been informed that the Chung Wang as well as all the rebels in the silk districts wanted to surrender, but since the Soochow-affair they didn't know how. He then asks, "Is not this a time for foreign Governments to come forward and arrange the terms? The power is in this force, if the authority from Pekin is given to it to act under some honest Chinamen. What is now to be feared is that foreigners will join the rebels, and will thus cause the war to linger on, to the extermination of the unfortunate people on whom the burden falls, and to the detriment of trade of every sort." Major Gordon, then, must have felt that

42 All the histories of the period stress Gordon's enormous preoccupation with his word of honor. He had given the Wongs his word that their lives would be spared if they surrendered. However, this writer views the whole episode as an excuse for Gordon, the Foreign Office, et al., to extricate themselves from the whole China mess.

43 Markham to Bruce, Dec. 11, 1863, 32987, 186.

44 Mem., Events, 29 Nov., and 7 Dec. 1863, 32957, 186-189.

45 Loc. cit.
the Wangs' murder would (1) discourage other capitulations now pending, (2) make future operations of the E.-V.A. impossible, (3) encourage European enlistments in the insurgent cause, (and finally, (4) its total effect would draw out the civil war.

As for the first point listed above, the executions seem not to have discouraged further surrenders. Such alleged treachery was after all quite typical of the whole civil war, frequently practised by both sides. And as a matter of fact, the capitulation of Soochow, was soon followed by that of "Cha-poo, Kea-shen, Ping-hoo-heen and Hae yen-heen; and further," wrote Sir R. Hart, "Ting Wang, at Kea-heng-foo, as also the rebel leader at Hang-chow itself, are both in communication with the Footae's agents, and their surrender may now be heard of any day." Hart, of course, Inspector General of the China Customs, was even then of a decided pro-Peking bent, but nevertheless the murder of the Wangs did not much influence the future of Imperialist successes. Nor did it unnecessarily draw out the civil war as subsequent events have shown.

46 Mem., Events, 28 Nov. and 6 Dec. 1863, \(329\), 195-198. Gordon states his men were so disgusted that they wanted to go over en masse to the rebels.

47 Hart to Bruce, Feb. 6, 1864, \(348\), 25-29; Narrative, events, etc. \(348\), 20-22.
As for discouraging European enlistments or the Ever-Victorious Army dissolving, -- these did not, in the end, occur either. Major Gordon's men, having been cheated out of the loot of Soochow, and forced to accept a promise of a month's pay, were in a fighting mood, but not to fight Taipings. Faced with these difficulties, Gordon appears to have asked General Brown's aid. The general, who was at the time proceeding to Hong Kong, immediately changed his destination and left post-haste for Kunshan, arriving at Gordon's camp December 9. Here H.M.'s Commander of the China regulars found a complete lack of discipline and morale. The Imperialist "cruelties had turned the sympathies of Europeans in favour of the rebels, and I found it necessary in order to restore discipline, and to avert a perhaps total defection of the force, to take Major Gordon and his force formally under my command." For some reason, perhaps the authoritative and powerful position of H.M.'s general which may have successfully cowed Gordon's men, General Brown could report with satisfaction that "this move on my part... had the best effect; all ranks now expressed their perfect satisfaction and reliance, and every symptom of hesitation disappeared from the force under Major Gordon's command."


49 There is no explanation in the official papers; speculation may be in order.

50 Brown to Bruce, loc. cit.
then proceeded to Soochow for an interview with the Fu'tai. Confronted by General Brown, the Governor freely affirmed, as he had many times previously, his willingness to accept full responsibility for the Soochow affair, but the General felt "he (...ie., Li) was either unable or unwilling to offer any exculpation, or explanation of his conduct."

General Brown then expressed:

"the indignation and grief with which the English people, together with all the civilized nations of the world, would regard his (...ie., Li's) cruelty and perfidy. I exposed to him my views on the impolicy of a fruitless severity which paralyzed his friends, and drove the rebels to desperation, at the time when we had good reason to believe they were prepared to capitulate and return to their homes in peace. I then informed him that I should insist on the promised reward of one month's pay; that I deemed it my duty to refer the whole matter to our Minister at Pekin, and that pending such reference, Major Gordon had received instructions from me to suspend all active aid to the Imperialist's cause, further than protecting Soochow, knowing its importance to the safety of Shanghae, and warning the rebels to abstain from attacking his position. I concluded by expressing my unhesitating conviction, that after what had occurred, my Government would withdraw all assistance hitherto afforded to the Imperialist cause, recall Major Gordon, and all English subjects serving under him, and disband the Anglo-Chinese Force." (Italics supplied)  

General Brown concluded by stating he would support all of Gordon's demands for payment. He further suggested that the
force be disbanded, the wounded provided for by funds of the Chinese Government, and that no foreigners of any nationality be permitted to serve with the Imperialist army, "thus leaving the Chinese to fight their own battles." The British would, however, retain their defensive radius about Taitsang.

Evidently, the Soochow affair which had become a cause célèbre, hinged not entirely on the honor of an English officer, as the conventional histories have stressed, but rather more upon the purported cancellation of all of the British aid to the Imperialist cause. This is not to deny the intrinsic honor of Charles George Gordon. All of the Gordon manuscripts and contemporary testimonials bear out his sensitivity to individual honor, as well as his inherent mysticism conjoined to an intense emotional personality. On the other hand, there are indications, that Gordon may have been anxious to leave China at this time. The question of honor was as good an excuse as any.

It is possible, too, that missionary opinion and public reaction in England may have embarrassed the British Government. Or it may have been that the Foreign Office found

52 Loc. cit. It is wholly probable that General Brown's hostile attitude towards Li Hung Chang may have been partially prompted by the refusal of the latter to accept General Brown's frequently proffered military advice and material aid. -Cf. Osborn's Remarks, etc., Sept. 28, 1863, 32717, 10-11.

in the Soochow incident its own opportunity to extricate itself from the China mess, an opinion to which the present writer has a strong propensity.

Whatever the basic motivations, Her Majesty's Government saw fit to revoke both Orders in Council by which British support, surreptitiously or otherwise had been tendered the Chinese Emperor. This move, General Brown had candidly foreseen as indicated above. Earl Russel wrote that the revocation of the January 9 Order "is intended to mark the dissatisfaction felt by Her Majesty's Government at the conduct of the Chinese authorities on the capture of Soochow, in setting aside the engagements under which alone that important city was, through the intervention of an officer belonging to Her Majesty's service though at the time acting with a Chinese force, restored to the Imperial Government." This revocation would be effective at the expiration of three calendar months from March 1, 1864. The original January 9 Order in Council would have expired by September 1, 1864, unless otherwise renewed. Actually, then,

54 Order in Council, Aug. 30, 1862, respecting the Lay-Osborn flotilla; Order in Council, Jan. 9, 1863, respecting enlistment of British officers in the Chinese service.

55 Russel to Bruce, March 8, 1864, 32957, 198. Presumably, London was satisfied with Gordon's procedure, as it raised his rank from Major to Lieutenant-Colonel (...ie., regular British rank).
the revocation merely reduced the total duration of aid to Peking by three months. The Ever-Victorious Army, however, continued in the field until nearly the very last, and was mustered out on May 31, 1864.

If London were so displeased with l'affaire Soochow as to effect an immediate unconditional withdrawal of further aid to the Chinese Emperor, Peking, itself, was enormously pleased with the Soochow surrender. An imperial decree heaped generous honors upon Li Hung-chang, Ch'eng Hsiieh-ch'i, Tseng Kuo-fan and a substantial number of other officers. Both Li and Ch'eng received the yellow robe, while the former was honored, in addition by the title of "Guardian of the Heir-apparent." While the official decree seemed to give the Chinese officers most of the credit for the capture of Soochow, Gordon was, by no means, forgotten. Gordon, after having been described as of assistance to the above military operations, was then cited for his great skill

56 Tseng Kuo-fan, though engaged at Nanking, had sent a troop contingent to Soochow.

57 The most important of these were Li Ch'ou-pin, who had slaughtered escaping rebels from one of the city's gates (Pan Men) and Huang I-sheng. Both men received the Yiin Ch'i Yu (Fourth rank button).

58 "Gordon also established himself close to the city walls and opened a canonade against them...i.e., the rebels." (Italics supplied). — Imperial Decree, etc., Peking Gazette, Dec. 14, 1863, 34087, 1-2.
and zeal. The Chinese emperor commanded him to receive a military decoration of the first rank and a sum of 10,000 taels. 59 The reward was, however, flatly refused, by which action Gordon was able for all time, to prove he was not a mercenary; possibly, he may have felt that the bounty came from Li and the Kiangsu authorities.

Meanwhile, Gordon in a sulky mood after Soochow, remained totally inactive. This inactivity was costing the Governor of Kiangsu some 50,000 $, while it might even present the insurgents with an opportunity to repair their wounds and attack again in full force, thus prolonging the war for many years. Furthermore, the Fut'ai had complied with all of Gordon's demands, including payments to the wounded.

Within the force, dissension developed and cliques formed. It was even rumored that Li Hung-chang was considering a new commander for the E.-V.A. As a matter of fact, a Colonel Brennan had announced his intention of taking over Gordon's command. Major Gordon found himself compelled to

59 Loc. cit.
60 Morse, 2:104-105.

61 Brown to de Grey and Ripon, March 31, 1864, √34087, 20. This is General Brown's analysis, but it is based on the rather over-drawn conception of the role of foreign aid in suppressing the TP rebellion. The imperialists seem to have quite securely bottled up the insurgents at Hankow. However, there was certainly the possibility of continued disorder and anarchy in the Potung peninsula. The insurgents still retained Changchow and though they had lost Hangchow on the very date that Brown wrote his dispatch he could not have yet been aware of its fall.
remove Brennan as well as some sixteen other officers. Obviously, the situation was serious. Furthermore, Burgevine who was still at large, might now easily make himself the nucleus for a new European-officered army fighting on the Taiping side. Such a probability might necessitate a fully mobilized contingent of regular troops, necessitating great financial expenditures. The embarrassment to the British Government, necessarily obligated to defend the treaty port merchant settlements but unable to face the British public on the question of intervention in China—such a spectre demanded immediate attention. The British could not "be expected to garrison Shanghai indefinitely and tranquillity cannot be relied on until a Civil Administration suited to Chinese ideas and habits is finally established in the province, and until the disorderly and brigand element which forms the force of the Taiping insurrection is either put down or so thoroughly repelled from its frontier as to leave that unfortunate Province in peace."

A series of third-party parpourlers, begun immediately after Soochow, by General Brown, Sir R. Hart and others now

62 Narrative of Events, etc., 34087, 20-22.
64 Loc. cit.
65 Bruce to Gordon, March 12, 1864, 34087 22-23.
began to bear fruit. Li had been from the first anxious to retain Gordon's cooperation, if not for personal reasons, then at least because Gordon symbolized British aid. Finally, by February, it had become known to Gordon that some 300 Europeans were ready to join Burgevine, who it was rumored now planned a return to the Taipings. Li would not, after his experience with Gordon, place another British officer in his place. The Ever-Victorious Army would probably come under adventurer-mercenary leadership, similar to the days of Ward and Burgevine. Consequently, Gordon, now startlingly aware of these factors in the new situation which had developed, determined to take the field again. He was nevertheless quite aware of the censure he would receive from this new course. Evidently British opinion expressing itself in the later actions of the Foreign Office must have crystallized into a tone hostile to the Peking regime.

66 Li's Memoirs (57-71, passim) indicates a general dislike for the superiority and arrogance of the foreign officers. The general statement above is primarily the writer's own deductions based on Li's statement coupled with the contents of the British China papers.

67 Gordon to Bruce, Feb. 6, 1864, 34087, 23-24.

68 Loc. cit.

69 The Order in Council revoking aid to the Imperialists was not to come until nearly a month later, March 1, 1864. Here again, as throughout, one must allow for differences in time and space.
Gordon's decision, apparently, received official approval among British officialdom in China and at least some assent in London. Sir Frederick Bruce, H.M.'s Minister to China approved completely and applauded Gordon's "honourable and manly conduct." Major-General Brown, H.M.'s Commander of the China forces, expressed his admiration for this English officer who "refused to indulge any private feelings of hostility to the Footae; and on public grounds, and in the cause of humanity, knowing the sufferings of the population, he overcame his repugnance to renewed co-operation with the Chinese authorities." Mr. Robert Hart, the Inspector General of Customs and known for his pro-Chinese views, participated in the mediation between Li and Gordon, and afterward drew up a statement at the request of both. Hart agreed that "Gordon is right in deciding on again taking the field," since "the British China policy has been to support the Imperialist cause, and general interests demand the speediest possible suppression of Taepingism." It may be recalled that when H.M.'s Government revoked all license to aid the Chinese emperor that it was specified the Order was to be effective three calendar months from the date of issue (March 1st). There was then a

70Bruce to Gordon, March 12, 1864, [34087], 22-23.
71Brown to deGrey and Ripon, March 31, 1864, [34087], 20.
72Bruce to Russel, March 21, 1864, [34087], 24-25.
73Hart to Bruce, Feb. 6, 1864, [34087], 25-29.
substantial period for further legitimate aid to the imperialist cause. Major Gordon and his official supporters in China were not then acting without license. And as a matter of fact they had not yet heard of the revocation until some time after the decision to continue aid to the imperialists. The Foreign Office, meanwhile, having given much thought to the specific position of Gordon in China, seems to have determined to withdraw his license and leave to aid the Chinese Government. The Order of March 1, 1864 quite definitely withdrew all present and future aid. One must ask, why the additional instructions to Sir F. Bruce and Major-General Brown "to withdraw explicitly from Major Gordon all leave and license to serve under the Emperor of China?" (Italics supplied).

The Parliamentary correspondence does not sufficiently clear up this point. The only plausible explanation may be that London was anxious that the Old China Hands fully understand that Gordon's withdrawal was specifically desired, and no further exceptions to his cooperating with the Imperialists might be tolerated. Only one concession was, however, allowed, and it is strikingly reminiscent of the incipient stages

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74 Layard to Lugard, April 25, 1864, 34087, 7.
75 Cf. Order in Council, March 1, 1864, 32957, 199.
76 de Grey and Ripon to Brown, April 26, 1864, 34087, 13; Russel to Bruce, April 26, 1864, 34087, 18.
of British intervention. The War Office explained to General Brown that although Gordon must quit the Chinese service, "if you should deem it advisable to employ him in defending Shanghae and the thirty-mile circle around it, you are liberty to do so, pending a reference to me, provided an arrangement can be made by which he would receive his orders direct from yourself, and would not be in the employment of the Chinese Government." (Italics supplied). Either London was singularly naive or simply cocking its eye to the future historical record. Actually, the Ever-Victorious Army had been acting under General Brown's imprimatur since the inception of the "loan of instructors" policy. Perhaps the non-interventionist response in England demanded that the Foreign Office use "guarded tones" to the War Office.

Whatever London might decide later, Gordon, now Lieuten-ant-Colonel (British rank) took the field again February 29, 1864. The activity which followed may be briefly summarized graphically:

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77 de Grey and Ripon to Brown, April 26, 1864, 3408, 18.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Campaigns; activity</th>
<th>Distance from Shanghai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1, 1864</td>
<td>E.-V.A. captures Thing</td>
<td>95 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 9</td>
<td>Liyang surrenders to E.-V.A.</td>
<td>115 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 20</td>
<td>E.-V.A. defeated at Kiutan</td>
<td>115 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 11</td>
<td>E.-V.A. defeats rebels at Hwaishu</td>
<td>70 miles ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>E.-V.A. takes Changchow</td>
<td>95 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 31, 1864</td>
<td>E.-V.A. mustered out at Kunshan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table demonstrates that none of the campaigns after Soochow were within the 30-mile range as specified by the 78 War Office instructions. The dispatch, quoted above, is dated April 26, 1864. It could hardly have arrived in time. Even the decision to revoke the Order in Council handed down March 1, 1864 could not possibly have arrived before the middle of April. Consequently, the dispatch may very well have been intended merely for the record. This, again, is speculation, but it appears plausible.

At any rate, the policy is clear. The Shanghai merchants settlement owed its raison d'être to trade. The Taiping rebellion had become a nuisance to trade on the

78Loc. cit.

79The Order in Council of March 1, was not actually dispatched until a full week later, March 8, 1864. The delay is not explained. — Cf. Russel to Bruce, March 8, 1864, 32957, 193.
Yangtze. The Imperial Government at Peking preferred, in the tradition of autonomous localism, to allow the provincial governors to act on their own. The British were unable to transform the localism of the Chinese into a smooth-working centralized political system. They nevertheless accepted the Imperialists as the better of two evils, because of historical tradition, because of their respect for the trading classes (and not just trade) and because of the concessions already wrung from Peking after 1860 and ratified (and in operation) after 1862. Finally, the British were already in economic possession of the Shanghai area. For all practical purposes the Potung peninsula had become a predominantly British sphere of influence and only partially shared by the French, Russians, Americans, et al. After 1862, the Taipings made consistent determined efforts under the Chung Wang to gain control of the area about Shanghai. Since the Kiangsu officials affected utter unconcern over Shanghai, slyly anticipating defensive measures by the European settlements, it was left entirely up to the British and other Europeans to defend themselves. In this they were aided, only by the Chinese merchant classes whose economic life had come to depend completely on the foreign trade.
CHAPTER VI

The Lay-Osborn Flotilla
One of the most interesting, albeit least successful aspects of Britain's China policy, from 1860 to 1864, was the attempt to interest Peking in a modern navy. This, even more than the quasi-official support given to the Ever-Victorious Army, constituted a scheme initially supported by some of the Old China Hands, rather than the Foreign Office.¹ Two of these Old China Hands, Horatio Nelson Lay and Robert Hart, and one of Her Majesty's naval officers, Captain Sherard Osborn, were to play the principal roles.

H. N. Lay, the first Inspector General of the China Maritime Customs² has been described as an energetic man with visions of great commercial development for the China treaty ports.³ Lay had lived through the preceding era of anarchy, unscrupulous smuggling, and generally unsavory business practices which characterized Shanghai, Canton, and

¹This statement demands some qualification. Mr. Lay, whose introduction follows immediately, earned the unmitigated enmity of the China merchants, by accusing the leading houses, Jardine, Matheson, et. al., of smuggling and other illegal practices. They, subsequently, did not lend full support to the schemes described.

²Cf. Correspondence Respecting Statements, Lay's Memorandum 32407.
³Lay's appointment dates as of January 21, 1861.
the other treaty ports. The organization of The China Customs owed its inception to these conditions; under Lay's organization much improvement had resulted. Though run by British officials, customs' collections reached their destination in Peking, where a policy of limited intimacy would later develop between the Chinese Government and the Customs Officials.

During one of the Taiping attacks on Shanghai (1861) Lay, who had participated in its defense, received wounds which so impaired his health as to make it necessary for him to leave his customs duties and sail for England. 4 Mr. Robert Hart, who later became a familiar figure to foreigners in China for over half a century, served as the Inspector General in Lay's stead. It seems to have been proposed, during Mr. Hart's stay at Peking, that an Imperial navy, officered by Europeans would play an effective role in suppressing the Taiping rebellion. Hart suggested that while Lay was in England, he might if properly authorized, conveniently arrange for the purchase of naval vessels for such a purpose. 5 The idea pleased Peking and Hart accordingly wrote to Lay of the plans, informing him of his new role as agent for the proposed naval fleet. 6

4 Morse, 2:34.

5 Morse, 2:35; cf. Prince Kung's Instructions to Lay, Oct. 24, 1862 [2717], 6.

6 Lay to Hammond, Oct. 9, 1862 [32717], 3-4.
Lay was apparently strongly fascinated with the scheme and immediately engaged the services of a Captain Sherard Osborn as the proposed commander of the fleet.

At this time, the British Government still retained a policy of strict neutrality in the Taiping rebellion; certain legal restrictions were involved as regards the enlistment of men and the equipment of vessels to serve the China Government. Lay, consequently, found it necessary to carry on an extended correspondence with the Foreign Office and other government departments. This has been partially recounted elsewhere\(^7\) but must be resumed at this juncture.

On June 16, 1862 Lay wrote to Earl Russel, requesting:

(1) the repeal of Sir John Bowring's Ordinance, (2) that British naval officers who so desired be granted leave of absence "to join the proposed naval force" and (3) that the British Government notify the "civil and naval authorities in China that the organization of the naval force in question has the sanction of H. M.'s Government." Lay proclaimed that the Chinese Government's plan was "to re-establish order throughout the Empire." Customs revenue funds had been authorized for the expenses of the naval force. Such a force would not only reestablish the Peking Government's control of the Yangtze but it would also achieve commercial

\(^7\) Supra, 46-51.
security; there would be an end to piracy on the seas. Mr. Lay felt sure that the project would be favorable to His Majesty's Government, for among other reasons, it would relieve Great Britain of the expense involved in retaining a large navy in the China waters. Finally, the proposed fleet would "in no way compromise H. M.'s Government, while it possesses at the same time all the advantages without the inconveniences of direct aid." (Italics supplied) Thus Lay shrewdly pointed out a line of official policy which might be neither flesh nor fowl, would be difficult to label as interventionist, and yet would accomplish its purpose.

As for the first difficulty (i.e., the Neutrality Ordinance of 1854)—this had already been abrogated by the recently issued instructions to the military, naval, and civil authorities in China. The Foreign Office was quite willing to accede to Lay's second request, viz., to grant officers' leave for volunteers, provided they were not indispensable. They would, however, have to go through Foreign Office channels to gain permission to enter the Imperialist service. The Foreign Office, concurrently, cautiously advised the Admiralty, that "every officer, naval or military,

8 Lay to Russel, June 16, 1862 [3057], No. 1.
9 Paget to Secretary of Admiralty, June 25, 1862.
entering the Chinese service should have the Queen's license for so doing."\textsuperscript{10}

At the same time, Captain Osborn applied to the Foreign Office, requesting a grant of leave in order to take temporary service with the Chinese government; his innocuous purpose—the organization of a naval-military force to suppress piracy in the Chinese empire.\textsuperscript{11} The Foreign Office then inquired of the Admiralty if permission for Osborn's release would be granted. The Admiralty's response was to grant leave of absence immediately.\textsuperscript{12}

By August 28, 1862, Lay had already purchased five vessels.\textsuperscript{13} He and Osborn had two weeks earlier even designed a national flag for China which the ships would have.\textsuperscript{14} They asked recognition for this emblem by the British authorities in China. This was granted, after not a little astonishment at the Foreign Office that China had no flag.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{10} Hammond to Admiralty, July 1, 1862 \textsuperscript{30577}, No. 4.
\textsuperscript{11} Osborn to Layard, July 8, 1862 \textsuperscript{30577}, No. 8.
\textsuperscript{12} C. Paget to Layard, July 9, 1862 \textsuperscript{30577}, No. 10.
\textsuperscript{13} Lay to Russel, Aug. 28, 1862 \textsuperscript{32717}, 1-2.
\textsuperscript{14} Lay to Osborn and Russel, Aug. 13, 1862 \textsuperscript{32717}, 1.
\textsuperscript{15} Layard to Admiralty, Aug. 28, 1862 \textsuperscript{32717}, 2; Admiralty to Layard, Aug. 29, 1862, \textsuperscript{32717/2}. 
Nevertheless, Earl Russel demanded (September 2) that the flag designed by Lay and Osborn have official Peking sanction. No such sanction ever arrived as the Chinese government had decided upon its own flag but this information was not received in London until April 13, 1863.

The flag, after all, was a small matter. On August 30, 1862 came the Order in Council authorizing Lay and Osborn, "and no other person or persons whatsoever" to accept enlistments "in the military and naval service of the said Emperor [Note: illegible text], and to serve the said Emperor in any military, warlike, or other operations, either by land or by sea, and for that purpose to go to any place or places beyong the seas, and to accept any commission, warrant, or other appointment from or under the said Emperor, and to accept any money, pay or reward for his service. . . ." Thus, permission from Her Majesty's Government was now achieved.

Despite the legality of the matter from London's viewpoint, the Foreign Office, anxious over questions of responsibility, demanded now of Lay that he show some "written authority" to act for the Chinese Government, although if such authority could not be provided, then Her Majesty's Government was in the meanwhile "prepared to act on the assurances of Mr. Bruce,

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16Russel to Bruce, Sept. 2, 1862 [32717], 3.
17Prince Kung to Bruce, Oct. 22, 1862 [32717], 5.
18Bruce to Russel, Jan. 4, 1863 [32717], 4.
and not interpose any delay in your proceedings."\(^19\) Fully a month later (Oct. 9)\(^20\) Lay explained that he already held "such written authority, dated the 14th March, 1862, from my _locum tenens_, Mr. Hart, to purchase and equip a steam fleet, in accordance with instructions from the Imperial Government." Indeed, Lay had since received regular sums of money from the China Customs for that specific purpose, and by direction of Prince Kung. Peking had also, through Robert Hart, urged the speediest arrival of the fleet.\(^21\)

During the interim, the Peking regime had formulated a letter of instructions for Mr. Lay's guidance, but it was not until January 15, 1863 that it reached its destination in England. The letter noted that Lay had been highly recommended by the Acting Inspector-General, Mr. Hart, and that as the latter requested that Mr. Lay be entrusted with the entire project, this dispatch was to be considered as transferring "the management of the affair into his \(\ldots\) i.e. Lay's\(^3\) hands." Three important questions were to be left

\(^{19}\) Hammond to Lay, Sept. 10, 1862 \(327\), 3.

\(^{20}\) Lay had been absent from England for the time, and had not been aware of this communication.

\(^{21}\) Lay to Hammond, Oct. 9, 1862 \(327\), 3-4.
to Mr. Lay's own discretion: the purchase of ships' supplies, the enlistment of ships' personnel and the conjoining arrangements of "terms and conditions of every description of agreement" and the matter of salaries, wages, and funds. If the Inspector-General thought fit, he might appoint "a person to help him, and also to make whatever arrangements may, in his judgment, seem desirable, with a view to the successful carrying out (of the objects in view)."

The communication ended on a note of urgent necessity; China needed ships and guns. The least delay should be avoided.

Lay, as the agent of the Chinese Government in London, now possessed a full carte blanche.

With Peking support officially assured, Mr. Lay and Captain Osborn proceeded to draw up an agreement the day (January 16, 1863) following the receipt of the letter of instructions, the purpose of which would embody their mutual understanding. Osborn would have full and unqualified powers as the commander of this European-Chinese navy. His commission stemmed directly from the Emperor at Peking and only orders from the emperor would be obeyed. These orders could not be conveyed through any one other than Lay. By this arrangement, the Inspector General of Customs, in effect, became a kind of intermediary official between the throne and Captain Osborn.

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Osborn's commission would be of four years' duration and Lay would undertake to secure from Peking a four-year lump sum of money "as a guarantee fund" for the total maintenance and pay of the entire fleet.\textsuperscript{24} Appended to the agreement was an explanatory statement for a number of the more important clauses. The first of these, under which Captain Osborn received full command was "made a sine qua non by Captain Osborn." One significant clause was explained at great length. This was the second clause which usurped for the British commander the right to virtually commandeer all vessels, European-constructed or European-manned, already "in the employ of the Emperor of China, or under his authority, of the native guilds." This apparently inordinate demand was explained by the fact that local mandarins in the treaty ports frequently bought ships and hired European crews; then, pretending to be men-of-war, actually degenerated into "half pirates, half privateers" virtually choking the Yangtze.

Such an agreement fully met the aims of Mr. Lay, whose main object seems to have been a powerful fleet, controlled by the China Maritime Customs. It would make customs collec-

\textsuperscript{24}This four year arrangement seems rather presumptuous as the Order in Council, under which the Lay-Osborn flotilla received its imprimatur, specifically provided for only a two year term.

\textit{cf.} Order in Council, Aug. 30, 1862 \( \frac{\text{327}}{\text{27}} \), 199.
tions more efficient, clean up piracy and protect the Treaty ports from Taiping and other marauders. Finally, it would remain in the control of the Inspector General, who alone might decide, according to the Lay-Osborn agreement, whether orders from the Emperor were reasonable enough to be obeyed by Captain Osborn.  

"Armed with this power," wrote Bruce, "he hoped by threats of suspending the action of the flotilla, and of withholding the funds, that the Chinese Government would be compelled to adopt such measures as he should propose."  

Obviously, Peking could not be expected to accept such an arrangement.

The British assembled naval fleet, under Captain Osborn finally arrived in Shanghai in September, 1863, where an imperial decree had already been received embodying Prince Kung's instructions to the English commander.  

Now he learned the very different views of the central government. Osborn would, according to the decree, be placed under a Chinese commander. Osborn would be only the Assistant Commander-in-Chief. The Governor-General of the two Kiang

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25 Clause 5 reads:
"Lay, upon his part, engages to refuse to be the medium of any orders [. . . .i.e., from the Emperor] of the reasonableness of which he is not satisfied."--loc. cit.

26 Bruce to Russell, Nov. 19, 1863 [32717], 21-25.

27 Morse, 2: 39.
provinces (viz., Tseng Kuo-fan) would appoint the first-in-command. The fleet would come immediately under the joint command of both Tseng Kuo-fan and Li Hung-chang, and Captain Osborn who would "take their instructions as to the disposal, from time to time, of his force." Chinese personnel were to be introduced gradually into the crews manning the ships, whenever feasible, in order that Chinese sailors might become acquainted with modern naval procedures.  

Captain Osborn, having agreed to entirely different conditions with Lay in England, could not submit to this completely opposite arrangement emanating from Peking. He consequently determined to go to the capital and demand the ratification of his agreement with Lay, which embraced the conditions under which he, Osborn, had agreed to take command of the fleet. Here he met Lay who was as upset as Osborn over the imperial decree. Lay vigorously denied the contentions of the Chinese officials that he had agreed to accept the condition of second-in-command for Osborn.  

This of course would completely change the character of the

28 Prince Kung's Instructions to Osborn, July 8, 1868
\[32717\], 8-10.

29 Morse, 2:41.

30 Prince Kung's Instructions to Osborn, July 8, 1863
\[32717\], 8010.

cf. Remarks by Mr. Lay (found in above).
fleet and its relationship to the Chinese government. The incipient navy would become a plaything for the provincial officials and its strength would soon be spent in the civil war raging on the Yangtze. Ranking British naval personnel would then be forced to submit to the kind of treatment accorded Major Gordon. In fact, Captain Osborn specifically feared the overlordship of Li Hung-chang, about whom General Brown had apparently advised him in much detail. Li Osborn denounced "as unprincipled as all Chinese officials," whose plan "would be to render me powerless, and then use or toss me aside, just as he does all European leaders in his force."  

A series of fruitless negotiations were the end result between Osborn and Lay and the Peking authorities who stated finally that they had not considered their instructions as giving Lay the powers to become an arm of the executive of the central government. Peking did not look upon Lay as anything more than a subordinate employee over the foreign trade, and not "as a political officer at all, nor do they
different matter. After thoroughly denouncing the character of Li, he recounts how the Governor has refused to accept the proffered military supplies from the British stores and instead deals with private firms. Furthermore, Li "will listen to no advice or suggestion the General offers" on military matters. Osborn concludes bitterly that Li "is not a bit more unreasonable than other Mandarins and, that he is an average specimen of his class."

31 Osborn's Remarks, Letter of Instruction, Sept. 28, 1863 [327]/17, 10-12.
32 Loc. cit., Osborn's remarks are interesting in a quite different matter. After thoroughly denouncing the character of Li, he recounts how the Governor has refused to accept the proffered military supplies from the British stores and instead deals with private firms. Furthermore, Li "will listen to no advice or suggestion the General offers" on military matters. Osborn concludes bitterly that Li "is not a bit more unreasonable than other Mandarins and, that he is an average specimen of his class."
consult him as of right even in questions affecting foreign trade."\(^{33}\) Furthermore, they seem to have felt that Hart, who initiated the whole project, quite definitely agreed beforehand to the subordinate role of a British officer in the naval fleet,\(^{34}\) and this seems to be borne out by a record of the proposals of Mr. Hart at the time.\(^{35}\) However, Mr. Hart had made plain that his ideas were only proposals; that "what the actual arrangement will be can only be known when the vessels arrive."\(^{36}\) Nevertheless, Peking was on firm ground in having assumed the implication that Lay's procedure would not differ from that of Hart's, and it was upon this basis that it "accordingly prepared the letter of instructions to Mr. Lay as Mr. Hart had suggested."\(^{37}\)

Finally, on October 15, 1863, Captain Osborn, evidently sensing the futility of further argument, boldly delivered an ultimatum to Prince Kung, which after reiterating

\(^{33}\) Bruce to Russel, Nov. 18, 1863, [32717], 21-25.

\(^{34}\) Prince Kung to Bruce, Oct. 25, 1863 [32717], 27-28.

\(^{35}\) Regulations proposed by Hart [32717], 28-29.

\(^{36}\) Loc.cit. It is noteworthy that Hart was well-known for his pro-Chinese sympathies among later nineteenth century Old China hands. "Sir Robert Hart is only one of the several Britons who become almost denationalized by contact with the Chinese."--cf. C. A. Middleton Smith, The British in China and Far Eastern Trade, (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co.), 95 f.

\(^{37}\) Prince Kung to Bruce, Oct. 25, 1863, [32717], 27-29/
his case, demanded the immediate ratification of the Lay-Osborn agreement. After referring to the difficulties of continued control over his men, Captain Osborn warned, "that if I do not receive a favourable reply within forty-eight hours it will be necessary to immediately disband the force." When it became clear that no answer might be forthcoming, Captain Osborn officially withdrew the fleet. However, since the ships he had brought from England were legally the property of the Imperial Government, Captain Osborn found it necessary to inquire of Sir F. Bruce as to their disposal. It was feared that the ships might fall into the hands of pirates and thus threaten the Shanghai trade. Bruce advised Captain Osborn to hold the ships "in deposit until the pleasure of Her Majesty's Government be known." Peking, however, requested that the ships be sent back to England. Bruce consequently felt

38 Of Osborn's Remarks, etc., Sept. 28, 1863 \[327\], 10-12. Li and other officials began immediately upon the fleet's arrival, to entice away the personnel by offers of higher pay and plentiful rewards. The provincial officials are reputed to have strongly opposed a national navy, and Peking was in no position to quarrel with its two most enterprising officials, Tseng and Li.


40 Osborn to Bruce, Oct. 19, 1863 \[327\], 13.

41 Bruce to Osborn, Oct. 20, 1863 \[327\], 13-14.
justified in instructing Captain Osborn to dispose of the ships in England, or in India. 42

In the disposal of the ships, a third party's interests seem to have been at stake. Mr. Burlingame, the United States Minister to China, stepped in at this juncture, serving as a sort of go-between for the Chinese authorities and Lay and Osborn. Burlingame explained his motives as "on account of the rebels in my own country, I made an earnest protest against the delivery of the ships to the Chinese." He had feared "the ships might fall into the hands of the Confederates, who are supposed to have agents in China."43

At any rate, the Peking government was quite generous towards the principal actors in the affair. All fleet personnel were paid from the date of departure from England

42 Bruce to Osborn, Nov. 6, 1863 32717, 14-15.
43 Burlingame to Bruce, Nov. 7, 1863 32717, 33-34.

Whether or not there actually were confederate agents in China, has not at this writing been ascertained. It is hoped that a search, still in progress, may yield some conclusive information.

American policy in the Taiping Rebellion has been largely ignored, as has been that of France. Obviously, this paper encompasses only a narrow monographic scope. Nevertheless, Great Britain did play the leading role. The United States in the throes of her own civil war could hardly be expected to participate to any degree. The Secretary of State (U.S.) regretted that because of the civil war then raging in his own country "we are unable to direct sufficient land and naval forces to the Chinese waters to command respect for our flag."

cf. National Archives, Records of the Dept. of State, Diplomatic Instructions, China 1:245.
through the time spent in China and up to the date of the return home. The Imperial Government also thanked the British Government for its trouble. It showed its further magnanimity by thanking Captain Osborn "for all the trouble to which he has been put in procuring the fleet and in bringing it out to China." In addition, Captain Osborn would receive a reward of 10,000 taels, above his regular pay "as a recompense for the (additional) trouble (to which he would be put)" in disbanding the fleet.⁴⁵

Mr. Lay, however, was dismissed from the customs inspectorate. Prince Kung observed that "if Mr. Lay were a Chinese subject, either in a public or private capacity, it would be (the Prince's) duty to have him punished according to the law; but considering that he is an Englishman, it remains (for the Prince) to instruct him to return to England, as it is not expedient that he be further employed by the Chinese Government."⁴⁶ In his stead, Robert Hart became the new Inspector-General of Customs.⁴⁷ Lay was, however, liberally rewarded financially. He was allowed

⁴⁴Bruce to Russel, Nov. 27, 1863 [32717], 134.
⁴⁵Prince Kung to Bruce, Nov. 2, 1863 [32717], 30-31.
⁴⁶Prince Kung to Bruce, Nov. 15, (1863) [32717], 35.
⁴⁷Loc. cit.
3,000 taels a month for expenses while in Peking; 8,000 a year (May 1, 1863-March 1864) and 6000 taels (2000 ) as a severance bonus.

All of the funds so liberally paid out were to be deducted from the amounts received from the sale of the ships and their equipment in England. The naval experiment can be thus shown to have been quite a costly affair.

The actual amount sanctioned by the Chinese Government for the naval budget ran to 1,295,000 taels. This money would be drawn on the expected receipts of the treaty ports, viz., Canton, Swatow, Amoy, Foochow, Kiukiang, and Shanghai. Actually, the total stipulated amount had not been quite exhausted, as the budget had been based on a combatant force with its concomitant expenses. Nevertheless, the monthly operating budget of the force was computed at some 75,000 taels, to which was added the cost of the voyage home (375,000 taels). The total cost of maintenance may be computed at some 700,000 taels.

The initial cost of the ships constituted an entirely

48 Bruce to Prince Kung, Nov. 6, 1863 [3271], 32-33.

49 Prince Kung to Lay [3271], 39.

50 The writer's own estimate based on the parliamentary papers cited. cf. [3271], 37-40.
separate item. It is difficult to gauge the exact cost to the Chinese Government of the ships when first purchased. Nevertheless, the ship's value was estimated at £152,000 on leaving China. However, by 1867, six ships, when sold, had brought no more than £51,350, although one remained still unsold. This, however, was not the amount promised to Peking. The British authorities had pledged £152,500 for the ships; there was thus £101,150 to make good.

As for the Foreign Office, its dispatches could hardly have arrived in time to aid Sir F. Bruce in coming to a decision over the disposal of the fleet. Nevertheless, London did concur in Bruce's decisions, and made every effort to have its instructions reach Captain Osborn, in time to keep the ships from falling into hostile hands. Her Majesty's Government seems to have had good reason for such anxiety.

51 Lay, as Inspector General, did not always give the Peking authorities a complete accounting, as he seems to have held the Chinese officials in a scarcely veiled contempt. His final accounts appear in order. The parliamentary papers consulted have not revealed the original ships' cost. cf. Mem., Lay to Foreign Board, Nov. 20, 1863 £32717, 37-38.

Also, cf., H. B. Morse and MacNair, Far Eastern International Relations, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1931), 247-250. These writers state the total cost to the Chinese of the naval experiment, as £500,000.

52 Anglo-Chinese Flotilla, estimate, etc. £117.

53 Hammond to Admiralty, Jan. 11, 1864 £32717, 15; Russell to Bruce, Jan. 11, 1864 £32717, 15.
Considering London's earlier policy towards the Confederates in the American Civil War there is much question as to the degree of British concern for the Union in 1864, in preventing the ships from falling into Southern hands. There may have been some general fear of having steam vessels fall into anyone's hands, potential foe or ally. France, for example, had by 1860 achieved naval parity with England, in terms of steam-operated vessels. The French had been systematically, during the years 1852-1859, converting older ships into the newer screw steamers. England, meanwhile, built entirely new ships, at a cost of four times that of the French vessels converted to steam.

The British navy, too, had distributed itself in too many places at the same time. The China fleet, alone, in the late spring of 1864 included forty-six regular ships of war and some ten other government owned vessels.

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55 Cobden's Political Writings, 2:304, as cited in Walpole, 1:315. For discussions of naval and allied questions of the time, see the following:
Finally, the tension in Europe was reaching its peak. Less than a month after London's anxious decision to keep the ships from hostile hands, a war broke out in Europe. Austrian and Prussian troops determined to settle the Schleswig-Holstein Question, marched into Schleswig, February 1, 1864.57 No great power could afford to lose new efficient armed steam ships.

It is not entirely clear whether the Admiralty played an official role through Captain Osborn in the previous account. The parliamentary papers range themselves too conveniently on the side of the British Government in this respect. That is, the documentary evidence as presented, would seem to indicate an inactive role for London, at least for the Foreign Office, and even the Admiralty, with this exception, perhaps—the alacrity with which the naval officials granted leave to Captain Osborn. However, until further evidence is presented, any speculation as to secret orders to English military and naval personnel in China, must remain in the realm of pure speculation.58


58 The general thesis of secret orders is adapted from the book by Lindley. He is, of course, pro-Taiping, having served in the rebel forces. Lindley (in referring to another incident) believes that the parliamentary papers do not reveal the entire story. The lapses he would explain by secret orders to British officers in China. However, I feel this is an indefensible thesis, mainly because the official correspondence reveals a split in the thinking of the Foreign Office and the Old China Hands. The China people continually
At any rate, Sir F. Bruce gained the respect of the other foreign representatives by refraining from interfering in the entire affair. His behaviour thereby prevented others from interfering. He wrote of "the importance of adhering, in China, strictly to a just and fair line of policy." Bruce keenly observed "that I should not have been justified in taking a more active part, for I had reason to believe that your lordship... i.e., Earl Russell had no cognizance of the undertaking of so novel a character entered into by Mr. Lay with Captain Osborn; and the absence of instructions was to me a significant proof that Her Majesty's Government had no intention of being a party to, or responsible for, the arrangements under which the operations of the flotilla were to be conducted." (Italics supplied). Bruce regretted that less expensive vessels had not been purchased to be used, not for suppressing the rebels, but designed "to carry out the revenue laws, and to assist in suppressing piracy." (Italics supplied). They would, of course, have

plead for more action, while London puts on the brake whenever possible.

More significantly, as indicated throughout this paper, secret orders were entirely unnecessary; military and naval personnel could be depended upon to consistently overstep their orders!

played a subordinate role in the civil war. In reply, the Foreign Office avoided comment on the larger aspects of Britain's China policy, and merely assured Bruce that "Her Majesty's Government entirely approve of your ... i.e., Bruce's conduct" regarding the disposal of the Lay-Osborn fleet.  

59 Bruce to Russel, Nov. 19, 1863 [32717], 21-25.  
60 Russel to Bruce, Feb. 15, 1864 [32717], 40.
CHAPTER VII

Some Concluding Remarks
After 1860 the insurgents securely ringed themselves about Shanghai, effecting a stranglehold on European trade. From this threatening situation the local merchants urgently pleaded deliverance, besieging the English and French consuls. The trading community's helplessness was further aggravated by Peking's absolute inertia; the Manchus counted on the foreigners to defend their own interests. Ningpo, which became a veritable testing ground, effectively demonstrated the impossibility of normal trade relations with the Taipings. As the siege of Shanghai wore on, the devastating effects on commerce brought firm protests from the British Chamber of Commerce; considerable martial spirit seized the Old China hands, and infractions of the official London policy of neutrality increased in frequency.

The foreigners contented themselves with the reinforcement of Shanghai's shoddy defenses and a withdrawal behind the British and French emplacements. Seriously limiting policy prohibitions prevented any actual show of force against the rebels. Only Ward's quasi-disciplined troops might take the offensive, exhibiting an occasional tour de force which was at first not infrequently greeted with an overt hostility by the British and French officials. It was not long, however,
before Ward's men became the nucleus for the development of a third force, capable of aggressive warfare, and fully supported by the European community. Her Majesty's Minister to China, Sir Frederick Bruce, soon boldly advocated an active offensive against the Taiping rebels. The Foreign Office at this time (1862) could only reply that the Chinese must first demonstrate their own desire to fight before Her Majesty's Government could consider supporting military intervention. Nevertheless, a policy of limited offensive potentiality developed out of the Shanghai defense requirements. The thirty-mile defense perimeter became the pattern of semi-official foreign intervention, involving the deployment of regular British and French units. A thirty mile limits policy could not have been otherwise, for it soon became clear that the Imperialists would not hold and garrison Shanghai's outlying defenses. Thus the defense of Shanghai (as that of Ningpo) encompassed the maintenance and possession of its entire geographic and economic hinterlands.

Steady pressure exerted itself from the Old China hands upon the Foreign Office. London's cautious "guarded tone" was not lost on Her Majesty's Minister to China, Old China hands were not discouraged. The situation in Europe was growing more critical; London's attention had to encompass the entire weltgestalt, and it was now concentrated on the continent.
Actually, even after the ratification of the Peking conventions, it was highly improbable that the allies would move their troops from north China to strike south at the Taipings; only after it was certain that the treaties would be honored, were the Europeans ready to trek back to Shanghai. The possibility that Russia, the *bête noire* of nineteenth century empire-builders, might aid the Imperialist government against the Taipings may have loomed large in these years;¹ it is also alleged that Peking asked for foreign aid.²


² Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Shanghai*, 144, and several other authorities as cited in Morse, 2: 23. It is stated that the Chinese flatly rejected a Russian offer of 10,000 troops to aid in suppressing the rebels. Morse seems to imply an anti-Russian orientation among the Chinese authorities, but this view is hardly compatible with the facts. [Infra.]

Lord Napier to Earl Russell, Feb. 4, 1864 31047, 155. Lord Napier reported that the Russian fleet was ordered to extend cooperation to the British and French China fleets.

Bruce to Russell, Nov. 19, 1863 32717, 21-25. Bruce stated that Peking had abandoned earlier the French drill instructor program at Tientsin, and had rejected "the gratuitous services of officers whom the Russian Government offered to lend them for that purpose." H. M.'s Minister related these facts to the general reluctance on the part of the Central Authorities, to employ foreign aid in the civil war raging, so long as provincial authorities could carry on independently. It was thus a matter of the autonomous provincialism in Chinese politics which stayed Peking's hand in accepting any foreign aid. But the provinces were free to do so. Also, V. W. L. Bales, *Tso Tsung-t'ang*, (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, Ltd., 1937), 189.

No matter how British officials in China might feel, there was still a considerable array of legal restrictions against intervention, for London had consistently maintained a policy of official neutrality in the Taiping rebellion. Some of these restrictions had become automatically dead-letters by recently issued instructions to H. M.'s civil and military officials. At any rate, by the summer of 1862, the Foreign Office approved in principle H. Lay's naval plans, on August 30, 1862 an Order in Council gave the Lay-Osborn flotilla legality; this was shortly followed by the Jan. 3 Order. London went so far in support of the legally constituted Peking regime as to prohibit British traders from selling munitions to the insurgents.

The death of Ward, Burgevine's leadership and subsequent dismissal, and the debacle of Taitsan were but the interim leading to the Gordon epoch in British intervention. Gordon's leadership of the Ever-Victorious Army, in line with the loan of half-pay English officers to the Chinese authorities, attempted to launch the Ward force as an uninhibited aggressive array, capable of operating beyond the thirty-mile limits area. Its basic strategy, irrespective of

"La part que prennent des allies a la repression des Taiping est le resultat des negociations du prince Young, qui a pris definitivement les renes du gouvernement a la mort de son frere, l'empereau Hien Foung, le 21 sout 1861."
its maximal operating distances from Shanghai, embodied not more than the snapping off of all the rebel extensions into the Potung peninsula defense perimeter; only a Chinese general, viz., Tseng Kuo-fan would capture Nanking and deal the Taipings the coup de grace. Gordon's remarkable military genius revealed itself (at a time when British official personnel in China seem to have increased their support) in a number of spectacular successes: the relief expedition at Taitsang, the capture of K'unshan with the aid of a naval gun-boat, and the siege-campaigns which led to the surrender of Soochow. The aftermath of Soochow, it will be recalled, culminated in London's final withdrawal from the limited policy of support to Imperialist forces. Earl Russell found in the murder of the rebel chieftain's the faux semblant for extricating H. M.'s Government from the embarrassment of further intervention.

Entangled in the fabric of the preceding narrative have been numerous references to the difficulties inherent in a foreign policy neither fish nor fowl, geared to satisfy non-interventionists at home, and ardent interventionists in China. The old China hands, totally oblivious to the implications of the Mitchell Report, staunchly supported (after 1862) by

3 Although the Mitchell Report and Lord Elgin's observations painted a gloomy picture of the future of the China market, trade actually increased steadily, especially that of 1862 over 1861. Cf. 33027 Commercial Reports from Her Majesty's Consuls in China for the year 1862, 23-40; et passim.
Her Majesty's military and civil officials, soon found that even the best-intentioned help could not cut through the maze of bureaucratic inefficiency. The central authorities could not ever overcome the obstinacy of provincial officialdom; the China body politic had degenerated into a vicious autonomism. Peking was helpless before the power of Tseng Kuo-fan and Li Hung-chang.

What, in summation, was British China policy in the years 1860-1864? It was first of all two policies, distinguished by point of origin, one from London and another in actual practice, the program of the old China hands. The old China hands developed trade-conscious techniques of dealing with Chinese provincial officials. The Britons in China frequently found themselves at odds with the Foreign Office, but the last word would always be London's. Nevertheless, nineteenth century considerations of time and space inevitably nourished a kind of diplomatic autonomy for the British in China. Despite this, London if it thought necessary, might easily have solved the communications problem by sending the kind of personnel to China who could be depended upon to follow an official policy. The Foreign Office, of course, did not feel that the situation in China in any way rivaled in importance that of India, Africa, or the continent.\(^4\) Frequently,

\(^4\)Comparatively little space is allotted, in most histories of British foreign policy and empire, to China and the Taiping rebellion is hardly mentioned. Even the principals in Britain's nineteenth century policy are silent.
there appeared a dearth of instructions to the British Minister
to China, nearly verging on the point of discourtesy! There
is also the possibility that the Foreign Office was not willing
always to commit itself for the record. This, of course,
raises the perennial question of secret orders, a thesis
which one contemporary observer found necessary to explain
the obvious differences between what London said and what
her representatives in China actually practiced. As pointed
out elsewhere, this writer feels strongly that there was a
dichotomy of interests (... i.e., the Foreign Office vs.
the Old China hands). How, otherwise, explain the differ-
ence in policy and practice? Was it due to faulty com-
munications, insubordinate personnel, Foreign Office ine-
ficiency or what? Perhaps all but the last were contributing
factors. However, it seems most plausible that London did
not too greatly preoccupy itself with the situation in China.
Certainly, Her Majesty's Government was fully aware that its
official instructions, as published, were frequently over-
stepped by her representatives, military, naval and civil. It
was, perhaps, also aware that Peking had been its foe in two
recent wars (in 1842 and 1858-1860). London was not quite
prepared to sympathize with the plight of the Manchu court,

Cf. Earl Russel, Recollections and Suggestions 1813-1873
G. F. Gooch (editor) The Later Correspondence of Lord
John Russel 1840-1878, II, (London: Longmans, Green and
with which no western nation could establish normal diplomatic relations.

London contented itself, thus, with approving a limited defense against the Taiping insurgents when they threatened the European treaty ports. The Foreign Office acted as strongly as possible to avoid becoming involved in the China civil war, but it was frequently presented with de facto situations, from which it could extricate itself only at the expense of the China merchants.

If London frequently censured the Old China hands' aggressive martial spirit, that fact alone does not cancel the basically commercial orientation of the Foreign Office China policy. This traditional contention remains a virile factor in any analysis of Britain's Far Eastern policy. London had an entire weltgestalt to consider. The needs of the China traders were not above those of other areas of the British Empire.
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Approved  E.P. Boardman

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