

The Indian Foreign Policy Bureaucracy

Jeffrey Benner



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About the Book and Author

In this book, Jeffrey Benner traces the history of the Indian foreign policy bureaucracy from the British period to the present, focusing on the bureaucracy's role in shaping policy. Because the bureaucracy has become an active agent in the policy process, its implementation of policy has often differed significantly from the original policy formulated by top leadership. The book includes a description of the foreign service cadre and a systematic breakdown of the functional and administrative structure of the Ministry of External Affairs, as well as the larger bureaucracy.

Jeffrey Benner is a Ph.D. candidate in political science at the University of Chicago.

To
my mother and father
for their love and support

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Jeffrey Benner

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Preface

This study is one of the administration of Indian foreign policy, but it is something more than that. I have suggested in various places that an analysis of bureaucratic functions can shed some light on Indian foreign policy. However, my early intention to make this chiefly a study of the causality between bureaucratic politics and foreign policy seems now a little ambitious, and so the study as the reader finds it has been scaled down considerably. I hope that the reader forgives me both for not attaining those earlier goals, and for letting the old ambitions remain in several places in the text. This is only a preliminary study, and will be followed by a much more comprehensive treatment of the topic to be published in mid-1988. Then I hope to shift this discussion to a somewhat higher conceptual level, a necessary step if this sort of study is to become useful to the student of foreign policy and not just to the student of administration. This study is a complete revision of my Indian-published book, *Structure of Decision*.¹

This study had many contributors, people who went to great troubles to help make this study work. This manuscript was supervised in various stages of its completion by Henry Hart, Bhabani Sen Gupta, and Bernard Cohen. Dr. Sen Gupta especially went far out of his way to help me in my research and the publication of an early draft of this book in India. He exerted a strong conceptual influence on the manuscript's evolution. Neil Richardson aided my research establishment in New Delhi. Joseph Elder gave me much encouragement in the pursuit of the topic and has helped me in the evolution of the final analytic product. Finally, Lloyd Rudolph assisted me in the history of the Office of the Prime Minister. In the final stages of this manuscript's production these men's assistance has helped turn an assemblage of facts and half-baked ideas into a readable, credible work.

When my research was under way another large group of scholars were with great benefit involved. Marcus Franda and his wife, Vonnice Franda, were indispensable

¹ Jeffrey Benner, *Structure of Decision: The Indian Foreign Policy Bureaucracy* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1984)

allies in breaking interview ground. I.J. Bahadur Singh, K.P. Misra, Bimal Prasad, Satish Kumar and S.D. Muni were all very helpful in explaining how different aspects of bureaucratic process contribute to final policy. Kuldeep Mathur helped me to locate some research materials that threw much light on the darker corners of the bureaucracy. K. Subrahmanyam consented to a very interesting interview on the subject of political-military coordination. Most of the information on the current bureaucratic environment presented in this study came from interviews with bureaucrats functioning in various positions both within the Ministry of External Affairs and elsewhere in Indian government. Their contribution to this manuscript is quite visible, but they are not mentioned by name to spare them any difficulties.

Others helped in various guises. N. Parameswaran Nair's PhD. dissertation is used heavily in the second chapter of this book, and his work has made much of the historical bent of this study possible. I was unable to contact Dr. Nair about his twenty-year-old research, and hope that he approves the wider propagation (presently only one copy of his work is known to exist) of parts of his very valuable work. J. Bandyopadhyaya and Shashi Tharoor were other scholars of great influence upon this study. Though I have been critical of some of their data and analysis, their excellent studies inspired this author and this book. I express my deep gratitude as well to the staffs of the Indian Council of World Affairs library, Jawaharlal Nehru University library, Benares Hindu University's Centre for the Study of Nepal and the University of Wisconsin's Memorial Library for their excellent research facilities. I also thank the University of Chicago's Computation Center for the use of their text editing and formatting SUPERWYLBUR SCRIPT GML facility. Despite the assistance of the above, errors in fact, of omission, or in interpretation are entirely the responsibility of the author.

My parents, David and Linda Benner, went along with me at every stage of the study's development without complaint (though they had ample cause at times for such). I can hardly begin to express my thanks to them for the help they rendered to me. My personal thanks go also to Rajender Lal Kuthiala and my friend R.C. of San Jose, the former a good friend and the latter an important inspirational support in this study.

*Jeffrey Benner
Chicago, Illinois
October 1, 1984*

I

Foreign Policy Bureaucratic Analysis

In the study of India's position in the world community we may look at a variety of objects to different benefit. Many such studies have been about the content of Indian foreign policy, or more precisely, of the position that the Indian government has taken on the many issues to have developed in post-World War II global politics. Of particular interest is the mechanical formulation of foreign policy. Equipped with such knowledge we may be able not only to better interpret Indian foreign policy but perhaps will be able to anticipate future shifts in policy, and to prescribe changes which may lead to improvements in the way policy is formed (once values are defined). Two possible approaches to the study of policy formulation lie in the study of policy flows or the chain of decision-making, and in the study of structures provided for policy formulation. The first is dynamic and the latter static, but together they would give us a very good idea of how policy is developed. The first dynamic approach would demand a specific, temporally-bounded (historically defined) inquiry into a foreign policy decision to lay bare its policy-making antecedents. Such studies, primarily of crisis decision-making, have been made of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis which transpired between the United States and the Soviet Union. Such studies have been conducted for India, but the area remains largely unexplored.¹

¹ For studies of the missile crisis, see Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971) or Elie Abel, *The Missile Crisis* (New York: Bantam, 1966). Two case studies of Indian decision-making are Ashok Kapur's *India's Nuclear Option: Atomic Diplomacy and Decision Making* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1976), and Arun Kumar Banerji's "Role of the Diplomat in the Decision-Making Pro-

Also mostly unexplored is the static, structural context of Indian foreign policy formulation, the study of bureaucratic and central executive structures. This study is primarily one of the Indian foreign policy bureaucracy, not only of the Ministry of External Affairs but of the surrounding foreign policy "community." It is not primarily an administrative study, though I deal with some purely administrative topics in an effort to show areas in which the machinery works well and not so well. This study has a secondary purpose in outlining the relationship of the top leadership, the "central executive," to the lower career leadership. I also deal with the historical development of the bureaucracy and of the bureaucracy--central executive relationship.

This approach to the study of bureaucracy as a determinant in foreign policy has a privileged position within the larger science of international relations. International relations, the study of human society on the largest possible magnitude of organization, is generally subdivided into a number of smaller issue-areas for simplicity (as economics may be subdivided into micro- and macroeconomics). Different solutions to the "level of analysis problem" have been proposed on an ad hoc basis, subdividing international relations theory into two to five separate levels. I have moved from ad hoc typologies to the development of a jurisdictional methodology labeled "neo-reductionism" (see Appendix A). Within the context of neo-reductionism, bureaucratic influences are assumed to be dominant within certain classes of international relations behavior. Organizational studies are not new to social science, but the application of organizational research to foreign policy problems was initiated in the 1960s, roughly at the time of the Kennedy administration, to deal with the new Washington bureau labyrinth. As a neo-reductionist submethodology, the bureaucratic level-of-analysis was most junior and therefore methodologically least developed.

The importance of the bureaucratic level-of-analysis, though, is not disputed; it is just not known yet how important the bureaucratic level-of-analysis will be as part of the total analysis.² The initial

cess: Some Case Studies," *India Quarterly*, April-June 1979, pp. 207-22. The author suggests that a good subject for a future study would be one of the decision-making that led to the Indian policy stance on the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union.

² For a critical view, read Robert J. Art, "Bureaucratic Politics and American Foreign Policy: A

observation behind the bureaucratic level-of-analysis is that policy does not emerge like the Platonic Idea from a void, but comes about through the operation of processes which may not be entirely concerned with the formulation of policy. A bureaucrat, for example, is not just a government official but a man or woman with family responsibilities, who may be concerned for the sake of his or her family that taking a certain policy stance might jeopardize his career goals. He may then not take the position, even if it makes for "good" policy. In the political decision-making process distortions of various types, for a variety of reasons, may occur. The scientist using this level-of-analysis thinks not only of what the "good" policy may be, but imagines himself inside the bureaucracy and asks: what type of policy is likely to emerge, given these formulative conditions? It is plausible even without looking into actual events that errors of different kinds might occur in a large organization's production and implementation of policy, but there are many documented cases of bureaucratic "interference" in policy. For example, during the October 1962 missile crisis President Kennedy ordered a blockade of Cuba in such a way as to minimize the chances of a reckless Soviet response, but the actual blockade was carried out according to very inappropriate standard blockade procedures, simply because that was the way that the Navy had always done things.³

Several like examples can be drawn from recent Indian history. We begin with an issue in military planning, the purchase of Gnat aircraft. In the early 1950s India's need for a good fighter jet was acute. By way of finding a solution the British statesman Mountbatten recommended the purchase of the low-altitude Gnat fighter from Folland's Company of Great Britain. Nehru and defence minister Vellodi both liked the Gnat's capability rating and recommended its deployment, as it was a much less expensive plane than anything else of its calibre on the market.⁴ The Air Force, however, preferred the French Ouragon, due to the Ouragon's greater technical sophistication, and stalled for over a year and a half before Nehru finally was able to pressure the air force to accept the purchase.⁵

Critique," *Policy Sciences* 4 (1973), pp. 467-90.

³ Abel, pp. 169-71.

⁴ "Defence," of course, is King's English rather than the American spelling.

A second example of Indian bureaucratic politics lies in the clash between the External Publicity Division in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the related services of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Immediately after 1947 a long quarrel had begun over who should represent Indian information abroad. Foreign service and information service officers would frequently not speak with each other in Indian missions abroad, and there was much duplication of efforts between the two bodies. A 1948 Cabinet decision on the quarrel was not carried out by either External Publicity Division or the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (the Cabinet recommended bimonthly coordination meetings between the Secretaries of MEA and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Contrary to this advice only two meetings were held 1948-58⁶). This is a picture not of a perfectly rational implementation of policy, but of a community with strong internal conflicts of interest; in short, a political bureaucracy. Bureaucratic politics can also be seen in the April 1965 decision by Shastri to create a Committee of Secretaries "for the coordination of political, economic, cultural, and other activities abroad." It was speculated that Shastri had created the Committee in an attempt to bypass the left-of-center MEA in formulating certain pro-Western policies, and this is certainly plausible, if not the only possibility. Obviously, the Indian bureaucracy does have an element of internal conflict, making a political approach necessary.

Possible evidence that the study of diplomatic and foreign policy organization may allow the prediction of international behavior may be found in the interest shown by some government bodies. O'Leary and Coplin report that of uses of political quantitative data by the Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), "[n]umber of diplomats or diplomatic missions" is mentioned more than any other political data but "[t]roop and arms strength." Though this is

⁵ B.N. Mullik, *My Years With Nehru*: -16 (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1972), pp. 125-31. According to Mullik, Gnats were used very successfully in the October 1965 war with Pakistan, as well as in the 1971 Bangladeshi Indian air operations. In the 1971 war they beat the performance of the Soviet MiG-25s utilized by the Pakistanis.

⁶ Werner Levi, "Foreign Policy: The Shastri Era," in K.P. Misra, ed., *Studies in Indian Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1969), p. 194.

probably due in part to the familiarity of such data to State Department analysts rather than because of the usefulness of the information, strength of diplomatic representation has considerable conditional utility as an index of international relationships. It is a corollary of this observation that the secretariat of those embassies and representations abroad, the foreign policy bureaucracy, would be regarded by these analysts as an important source of information about the international relationship. If, for example, information from a particular nation or region is regarded as especially valuable, we would expect special care to be taken to ensure proper handling and analysis of the information. Perhaps we would find a larger proportion of senior analysts in the section of the bureaucracy in communication with the diplomatic representation of that region. We might thereby discover the value of an international relation to an elite through the study of the bureaucracy.

The organizational response to the international environment will differ by nation and by period. United States leadership has at different times vested confidence in the use of staffs, a special Assistant to the President, and in the Secretary of State in attempting to manage the bureaucracy. In Great Britain, leadership has handled the problem by the use of unofficial agents, by relying heavily on the Cabinet Office and through the frequent mergers of departments. In India, with its powerful Prime Ministership, its responsibilities and constraints as a developing nation and the strong legitimizing influence of foreign affairs for Indian leadership, we can expect a significantly different organization to develop, despite the British organizational precedent in South Asia.

How does it develop? It is a common myth held by administrators and students of administration that development occurs when the administrator grasps through a problem-solving process that a problem exists, and sets up a new or modifies an existing division to handle the problem. Then, the officers of the new division come in at ten, do their jobs, and go home at five. This myth treats any type of administration as a machine in which one feeds a certain input, and receives a measured output (political scientists of the

⁷ Of all uses of quantitative data by the INR in the given sample, political, economic or social, "[n]umber of diplomats or diplomatic missions" ranked only fourth among twenty-two categories. Michael K. O'Leary, William D. Coplin, *Quantitative Techniques in Foreign Policy Analysis and Forecasting* (New York: Praeger, 1975), p. 6.

structuralist school may be said to treat national political life in a similar fashion). The national leadership needs only to crank the lever, and the government will faithfully do its duty. It is an organic view, treating the bureaucracy as an organism in which the various "cells" of the body work together in harmony by their very nature. Organizational malaise (dissent, inefficiency, corruption) is a rare aberration which can be quickly corrected by proper administration. It is not usually granted that organizational equilibria may be dysfunctional relative to leadership. The only internally completely cooperative subset of any social system, however, is the unit subset of the human being (and even here it is doubtful that internal tradeoffs resulting from internal conflict do not occur). Above the level of the individual, political, conflictual behavior to some extent determines outcomes rather than mechanistic, formally determinate systems. We need, therefore, to transcend the perspective that informal, political behavior is somehow countersystemic and illegitimate. Such behavior may in some cases not serve the interests of leadership, but this should not arrest research within such a nonnormative framework as the author assumes. It is equally true, though, that bureaucratic politics is frequently played out to the advantage of national political leadership.

For all this, we need not consider the bureaucracy a Hobbesian wonderland, but simply acknowledge its indeterminacy or superdeterminacy. In the United States examples of the operation of bureaucratic politics can easily be found. During the Johnson administration, biological weapons were increasingly seen as a political liability, being of little use to American defense efforts, and attempts were made to abandon the weaponry. However, because the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were in disagreement on many other issues, the Secretary decided to support the biological weapons program in return for the army chief of staff's support on other issues.⁸

This study will define bureaucracy rather broadly. We consider those entities the bureaucracy which fulfill the following three conditions:⁹

⁸ The biological weaponry program was not abolished until the Nixon administration and the end of the Vietnam War. See I.M. Destler, *Presidents, Bureaucrats and Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 60.

⁹ One might also call the set of all such entities the foreign policy establishment, but the label of establishment would include a set of perceptual modes,

1. They are involved in the formulation of foreign policy, or in implementation of the generated policy. Most groupings considered under this subdefinition would be involved in both formulation and implementation. Indira Gandhi's primary role is of a policy formulator, but when she represents India at international conferences she is acting as implementor. The MEA implements policy, but, as we shall see, it also plays a very important part in the formulation of policy. In this study, that group with the most comprehensive veto in the formulation of policy will be referred to as the *central executive*, while those individuals most responsible for the implementation will be termed *operational*.
2. They may be either individuals, small groups such as committees, or large organizations. This is perhaps not a standard administrative definition, but foreign affairs administration is not a standard case. The foreign policy process does not take place within a single ministry predominately, as does domestic security policy (which is left to the Home Ministry), or as in the regulation of Indian banking, which is conducted by the Ministry of Finance. Foreign policy and operations are probably potentially more identifiable with certain individuals, small groups and committees than other areas of government activity. Some entities which we may consider under this definition may not be easily classified in terms of the individual, group or organization. When the foreign minister speaks on some matter, does he speak as a powerful individual, at his own behest, or as a representative of the MEA? Or is he instead voicing the general sentiments of the cabinet?
3. They are either government or government-affiliated individuals or bodies. This will not be a study of the effect of public opinion or of lobby groups on foreign policy formulation (the domestic level-of-analysis' jurisdiction), though these may play a role in the policy process. With this last subdefinition, we have widened our

as well as a static organization within its effective designation. I do not in this study wish to detail organizational ethos and operational codes, but only the structure of relationships.

understanding of the bureaucracy as something beyond the MEA, but remaining within the constraints of the Indian government community.

II

The British Indian Foreign Policy Bureaucracy

We invoke Clio, the muse of history, in this chapter. It only may be useful but is certainly interesting to trace the early history of the bureaucracy, just as we trace the nexus of events which have led to our present strategic balance.

Indian independence was achieved in 1947, but the interim government was operational for some time previous to independence. That interim period had deep foundations in the British Indian administration. Our study will be concerned mainly with the modern period, but by virtue of a British rule in India more than a century and three-quarters old at the time of independence, there was an extant foreign affairs organization with traditions and bureaucratic precedents. In India, the transition to the administrative forms of a modern state were not so dramatic nor turbulent as in certain African and Asian states in which the entire administrative staff was shipped out when colonial rule was broken. Not only was there previous to independence an induction and indoctrination of a small but well-trained cadre of Indians into the Indian Civil Service (ICS), but the British constitutional genius was also carefully infused into emergent Indian governmental codes, resulting in continuity, not historical fracture, between the administrative ways of the British and those of the independent Indian leadership.

2.1 SEVENTEENTH AND EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Long before a bureaucracy had been developed to administer British expansion in India, the forms of Western diplomacy had been introduced to the subcontinent. English missionaries in the seventeenth century served

as emissaries of the British to the Moghul court.¹ These men, the heads of various orders of agencies, were diplomatic agents outside of the European diplomatic system. We see in this early period other manifestations of a developing subcontinent diplomacy. In 1723, the British East India Company signed its first treaty with an Indian state, an event which marked the beginning of the most important of British Indian diplomacy's roles, that of managing relations with the Indian states. That treaty first signed was the Treaty of Anjengo, with the Raja of Travancore. As many similar treaties followed Anjengo, the task of dealing with the Indian states became rapidly more complex. The confusion was not just that of numbers (there were over 640 Indian states) but also resulted from a deep British involvement in the affairs of each of these states after the acceptance of paramountcy in the states' internal affairs (post-1857). Complexity of coordination was not only horizontal but vertical as well. In the acquiescence to paramountcy the states retained their internal autonomy, while relinquishing to the British the powers of communication, defense and foreign relations. British control of the states' external relations eventually became quite complete, and N. Parameswaran Nair writes that the states

. . . could not receive even a commercial agent of a foreign power at his title. Commercial treaties were arranged for them by the Paramount power. They were not allowed to accept titles or honors from any foreign country or body. Their subjects were issued British passports and were given protection as British citizens in foreign countries.

As the affairs of the states began to be the subject of more British thought, terminology was devised by the close of the eighteenth century to describe these responsibilities. Work with the princely states came to be known as "political" as opposed to work in the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA), in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), or virtually any other part of the eastern world, which was designated as "foreign." This distinction was to remain an important influence on British administration throughout the era.

¹ One of the best known of such men was Sir Thomas Roe, who served in the Moghul court (1615-19).

The functions of the "foreign" sector of the bureaucracy would also rapidly grow, considering the rate of British imperialist adventurism after 1600. As Nair describes, the 1600 East India Charter

. . . had defined the jurisdiction of the Company not only over the whole of India, but also over the whole of the east. Numerous examples can be given of such territorial acquisitions by the Central and Local Governments during these years, like the acquisition of Ceylon in the first decades of the 19th century, the possession of St. Helena from 1658 to 1671 and again from 1673 to 1834, Lord Wellesley's projects about Mauritius and Batavia and the despatch of Indian forces to Cairo in 1800, the acquisition of Singapore in 1819 and the direct administration of the Straits Settlements till 1867 and the like. Active foreign relations were maintained with states and chieftains in Arabia, the Persian Gulf Area, Aden, Persia, Afghanistan, Tibet, Western China and Siam. In short, a very wide conception was 'entertained by the Governors-General of Indian responsibilities and foreign interests.'²

2.2 AFTER 1763

Somewhat previous to the establishment of a formal organization for external relations a general government for British expansion was established. As Nair writes,

On 3 November 1763 J. Graham, Secretary in the Public Department proposed to the Board a plan 'for the better regulating of transacting the business of Council at the Presidency of Fort William' and to 'remedy the present blended and irregular Method of Conducting the Business'. He suggested the division of the work into two Departments-- 'the one to be termed the Publick and the other the

² N. Parameswaran Nair, *The Administration of Foreign Affairs in India with Comparative Reference to Britain* (New Delhi: School of International Studies [dissertation], 1963), pp. 6, 10, 12.

Secret Department'. The former was to deal with 'all Affairs relating to shipping, Revenues, Fortifications, Accounts, Appointment of Servants', etc. The Secret Department was to conduct 'all Military Plans and Operations, the country correspondence and all Transactions with the Country Government'.

The designations of Public and Secret seem roughly to correspond to the modern division of public policy into low, domestic policy matters and high, foreign "power" policy. That even such a basic division of labor had not been necessary before 1763 is evidence of the small scale of East India Company's activities. The Secret handled a very wide range of activities in the early years after 1763, its records dealing with the battle of Buxar, the expedition against Cooch Behar, the cession of Kora and Allahabad to the Nawab Vazir, the Rohilla war, the British mission to Bhutan and Tibet, and clashes with French factories in Bengal, to name a few. The East India Company's early expansion had low administrative costs, with a staff of only a secretary and assistant secretary for both the Public and Secret Departments, one sub-secretary exclusively for Secret Department administration, and under him seven assistants. The secretary at that time received an annual salary of Rs. 4000.³

In 1774, four years before Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, the British had already established a large and well-administered government in India. It was divided into three departments, Public, Secret and Revenue, each of which was headed by a secretary, the highest career officer in the East India Company's government. We see in the secretary's preeminence one of the oldest surviving conventions of the British period, the present bureaucracy's most important link with the past. The second oldest surviving British Indian foreign policy convention, that of a government external affairs body, was effected in 1783 with the establishment of a Foreign Department.⁴ This Foreign Department was separate from the three older divisions, but was headed by the secretary of the Secret Department. It thus did not enjoy a completely autonomous existence, but was granted powers as part of the Secret

³ Nair, pp. 41-43.

⁴ The Foreign Department was not, as Dutt relates, set up in 1842. Subimal Dutt, *With Nehru in the Foreign Office* (Calcutta: Minerva Publications, 1977), p. 20.

Department, which itself was fully separated from Public in 1783 and given a separate secretary. The responsibilities of the first Foreign Department are seen in the Government of India declaration that

[t]he Secret Department properly comprises all subjects of a Political Nature, all the correspondence with the Presidents and Select Committees at the other Presidencies, also with the Councils there on Political Affairs. All the correspondence with Residents at Foreign Courts and at Benares all Transactions with Foreign Nations and Powers and every Military Operation or Movement of Troops which is either Ordered or undertaken.⁵

With its new organization the Secret Department had a secretary, sub-secretary, head assistant, nine assistants, two examiners, one register, and a ministerial staff of thirteen, for a staff total of twenty-eight (two years later this was trimmed a bit for "economy," a bureaucratic measure that would prove of timeless value).

That a fourth department was established to handle foreign relations in an eighteenth century colonial possession seems curious. Indian political relations with nations besides Great Britain should properly have been handled through London, but there were practical considerations which argued against this kind of centralization. Technology, or the lack of it, was the reason for a foreign policy center in India. From its seventeenth century emergence as a European convention until certain developments in the late nineteenth, the embassy was a formidable policy force for the country that it represented, concerning the nation that it was accredited to. This power flowed from the long interval taken by the round-trip passage of a letter or human emissary. Because of this, the agent or ambassador had to have broad powers to interpret his country's policies over the seasonal periods required to obtain formal clarification. When the telegraph came into common usage, and especially when the first undersea cables were laid, the central tendency of policy power began to change. The advent of the cable as a means of bureaucratic communication removed the rationale behind the policy centralization of embassies and agencies. Communication between London and any part of India took

⁵ Home Department/Public Branch/OC, September 23, 1783, No. 16.

from six months to a year, making the direct management of the empire from its metropolitan center impossible. London remained in full control of those broad policies which took a fairly long time to create and enact.⁶ Calcutta remained in careful mastery of the daily operations of the government bureaucracy, and could through control of the movement of the machine often influence even broad policy by presenting London with *fait accompli* (this being typical during the expansion phase, when the governor-general on his own initiative could and did start a number of regional wars).

The period of greatest Calcutta-bureau autonomy had been 1600-1765, the trading period, and in this interval the "... autonomy was greater in the conduct of ... relations with the Indian powers-- the Mughal Emperor at Delhi and the nawabs and chieftains in other parts of India."⁷ During this period, the power of the Indian bureaucracy was not prescribed but rather expedient. As soon as Whitehall had access to the requisite political structure (emerging in 1858), they wasted no time in centralizing to the degree possible. The author suggests however that the British might have wanted to maintain a decentralized decision-making rather than allow the bureaucratic art to imitate life, as happened with the advent of new communications technology. Another factor which encouraged greater decentralization was political expedience. Great Britain had an empire, but also a democracy whose politicians had to answer to the British parliament and people. The farther that imperial decision-makers were located from London's legislative halls and the inquisitive British press, the better for empire. News of the East India Company's (and later the British government's) activities in the east might yet make its way to Britain, but any political effects would be lessened by the time and distance that such news would take to leak out.⁸ Despite the apparent benefits of this kind of

⁶ We are assuming the identity of East India Company and British government policies even before the 1858 takeover. Previously, had there been any doubt of this coincidence of interests Whitehall would not have hesitated to take control of East India's operations. The question, however, requires a deeper look than this study can take into the London-Calcutta relationship.

⁷ Nair, p. 22.

⁸ Perhaps this decentralization of imperial decision-making was a factor contributing to the long life of British *samraj hakumet*, suggesting that divide-and-rule policy was applied not only to subject peoples

decentralization, there were dangers in allotting policy powers between London and Calcutta. Later, in 1812, two envoys were simultaneously appointed to Teheran by the authorities in the two policy capitals.

While the London envoy went on conducting peaceful negotiations for a treaty, a military expedition was on the move to Teheran on orders from Calcutta. The confusion was settled only when a third envoy with greater powers than the earlier two arrived from London and concluded a definite treaty.⁹

In 1784, the first attempt was made to effect a superdepartmental control of foreign policy management. The Pitt's India Act of that year provided for a secret committee of the Court of Directors, consisting operationally for most matters of the chairman and deputy chairman, but made up of a larger group of decision-makers on the full range of topics. This group might be judged similar to the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs of the modern Gandhi regime, both in the "height" of policy conducted by the committees and in the aggregate power of membership. The secret committee was though, unlike the present cabinet committee, a decision-making body. In 1786, the Secret Department was divided into four distinct branches: the Secret and Political, Secret and Military, Secret and Foreign, and Secret and Reform. The Secret Department at that time ceased to have a separate life, and these four branches were each made a distinct entity. The Secret and Political Department dealt with the Indian states. One important function of this department was state-oriented espionage toward the control of state elites and other intrastate groups. It maintained an internal intelligence network (the modern Indian Intelligence Bureau, while having very different responsibilities, inherits much of its breadth of powers from the old Secret and Political Department).

The Secret and Foreign Department dealt with the tribals in the western and eastern North; with Nepal, Tibet and Afghanistan, and with British possessions in the Persian Gulf. As remarked upon earlier, it also handled foreign relations for the Indian states. The

but, in the logic of empire, to one's own administration. Soviet administration seems increasingly to follow a similar philosophy.

⁹ Nair, pp. 25-26.

Secret and Military Department was the British border, expeditionary and internal police force. The Secret Department as a single bureau was again revived in 1790, only four years after it was disappeared as such, and conducted Calcutta's military planning and all transactions with the metropolitan center ("country government"). The Foreign and Political wings of the previous Secret setup were separated from and given equal administrative rank to Secret. They were then, with Secret, placed under one secretary. By the turn of the century there were four secretaries heading the British government in India, one in charge of the Public (including commercial) Department, a second heading the Secret, Political and Foreign Department, and one heading the Military Department. In 1799 the four departments were put in the general charge of a fourth chief secretary, with each department headed by secretaries instead of sub-secretaries (sub-secretaries had been in charge since 1796).

2.3 THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The activities of the Foreign Department underwent massive expansion in the nineteenth century, when in 1827 the diplomatic expenditures of the government of India amounted to nearly 500,000 pounds sterling, "... greater than the then diplomatic and consular charges, pensions included, of Great Britain, by far the largest of any nation in Europe."¹⁰ No important changes in structure occurred until 1833, when under the Charter Act of that year the Military and Secret Departments as well as legal consultation became the exclusive concerns of the government of India, with the same secretary taking over the Secret, Political, Revenue and Judicial Departments. This came about as a joint secretariat between the government of Bengal and the government of India was founded. Before that, all of India was administered, through the offices of the East India Company, under the government of Bengal. The Secret, Political and Foreign Department was redesignated in 1842 as the Foreign Department, under the governor-generalship of Lord Ellenborough. Its internal work continued to be divided into secret, political and foreign jurisdictions, or:

- Secret. All government transactions connected with wars, negotiations and missions.

¹⁰ Nair, p. 50.

- *Political.* Correspondence with residents and agents in ". . . Native Territory, managed Territory and Non-Regulation Provinces."
- *Foreign.* Transactions between the government of India and "Foreign European Powers."¹¹

Later that year the government's practice of recording political and foreign proceedings separately was stopped, and the two were combined into one file series. At that time, then, there were only two branches in the Foreign Department.

The newly-merged Government of India secretariat had in 1843 four secretaries (each earning a salary of Rs. 52,000), heading the Home, Foreign, Finance and Military Departments. This somewhat more homogeneous and sturdy bureau structure matched the more politically stable superstructure provided by the assumption of direct British government control in 1858. Calcutta was made the seat of the new government, the climax of a gradual shift since 1765 from Bombay and Madras (which had enjoyed some early authority) toward Bengal and Calcutta. A momentous event for India's political future, assumption of power by the Crown did not immediately cause any changes in the bureaucracy, though it did cause some alterations in the policy process. A Secretary of State for India was created by the 1858 Government of India Act. The secretary of state was now in charge of India's foreign relations. He was vested with all the powers and duties exercised formerly by the president of the East India Company's Board of Control and the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors. The ability of outsiders to affect the conduct of foreign relations was effectively negated by the classification of all relevant communications as secret. These documents might be shared with a member of the new council only at the secretary of state's discretion. The great power of the secretary of state created a contradiction, in that London of a few decades later would be promoting the idea of an India with quasi-international status--at the same time having foreign relations run by a secretary of state directly responsible to the British government, not to the government of India.¹² It could not, though, have been a worse contradiction than that of a governor-general who represented the British government as the viceroy as well as the government of India as the governor-general. The governor-general had, in any case, the

¹¹ Nair, p. 50.

¹² Nair, p. 36.