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The State at War in South Asia

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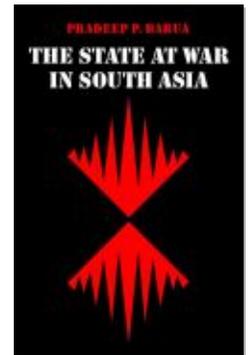
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Colonial Warfare in Bengal and Mysore

After Aurungzeb's death, the European powers began to compete openly for territory and concessions in India. Although not the first to make their presence felt in the region, by the end of the eighteenth century the British had become the dominant European power in the subcontinent. On 31 December 1600 Queen Elizabeth granted a charter to the "Governor and Company of the Merchants of London trading into the East Indies."¹ The next year a 300-ton-sail ship under Capt. William Hawkins reached Surat, where Hawkins established the company's first Indian factory. From this minuscule beginning the company, better known as the East India Company, began to expand its foothold in India. In 1615 James I sent Sir Thomas Roe as ambassador to Emperor Jahangir in Agra, where he received a firman, or legal document, acknowledging the British presence in Surat.² To the south Capt. Anthony Hippon founded a factory in Masulipatam, the port city of the Muslim Deccan kingdom of Golconda, in 1611. However, Dutch pressure forced the British to evacuate it in 1628. They then secured rights from a petty Hindu raja to establish Fort Saint George some 230 miles south of Masulipatam. This post soon developed into the town of Madras and became the base of British operations in southern India.³ From this fort the British moved into the northeast in 1633, when an expedition established stations at Hariharpur in the Mahanadi delta and Balasore on the boundary between Bengal proper and Orissa.⁴

From the moment they set foot in India in 1612 the British became embroiled in conflicts with the other European powers in India – the Dutch, the French, and the Portuguese. Furthermore, they also fought local powers like the Marathas. Matters came to a head in 1744 with the declaration of war in Europe between England and France. The French, led by the energetic Joseph-François Dupleix, governor-general of all French possessions in India, seized Madras from the British in October 1746, only to return it in 1748 under the terms of the Aix-la-Chapelle treaty.⁵ At about the same time the French in India began to focus on local politics. When Nizam-ul-Mulk,

former Mughal viceroy of the Deccan and later an independent ruler, died in 1748, the French supported Muzaffar Jang, one of the claimants to the throne, and waged a successful campaign against the challenger, Anwar-ud-Din, the ruler of Karnatik. The French then turned their attention to the second challenger, Nazir Jang, the de facto ruler of the Deccan who had British support, led by Maj. Stringer Lawrence. Muzaffar Jang defeated and killed Nazir Jang, and the French then installed Muzaffar as the ruler of the Deccan in their stronghold of Pondicherry. A grateful Muzaffar Jang bestowed upon the French considerable territories in southern India.⁶

In 1751 the British, by then under the leadership of Robert Clive, struck back by installing their own puppet, Muhammad Ali, as the nawab of Karnatik.⁷ Although the French eventually managed to establish a firm presence in the court of Hyderabad, they found themselves on the defensive; Dupleix himself was recalled to France in 1754.⁸ But in 1756 the Seven Years' War broke out in Europe, and the French renewed their efforts against the British in India under Thomas-Arthur de Lally, who had been sent to India in 1758. Unfortunately for the French, Lally's campaigns were a series of disasters and blunders. His first mistake was to recall Gen. Charles de Bussy from Hyderabad just when the general had all but taken over this powerful kingdom. On the battlefield Lally suffered constant defeat at British hands, culminating in the disaster at Wandiwash in January 1760. The French navy too made little headway against a smaller British fleet and ultimately let the British capture Pondicherry in January 1761. With the fall of Pondicherry all French hopes for an Indian empire were dashed. The British were now the lone European power in the subcontinent.⁹

While the British fought the French in southern India, they also carried out a protracted campaign in Bengal to expand their territories and influence. Bengal was a province of the Mughal Empire, and an appointed military governor, or faujdar, oversaw its administration. After the fall of the Mughal Empire the governor of Bengal, Ali Vardi Khan, broke away from Delhi's weak control in 1742. He ruled until his death in 1756, after which his son Siraj-ud-Daulah succeeded him. Both father and son maintained extremely rigid control of the Europeans at the trading posts in Bengal. The British, who had the largest presence in the region, resented this control. In 1752 Robert Orme, in a letter to Clive, noted that the company would have to remove Ali Vardi Khan in order to prosper.¹⁰ Under Siraj-ud-Daulah relations were even worse, and finally the nawab decided to expel the British from his domain. After a brief siege the British garrison in Calcutta fell on June 1756. Subsequently, some British prisoners died while being held in the fort. This incident, later propagandized as the infamous "black hole of Calcutta," gave the company the

perfect excuse to engage in a protracted campaign against the nawab. Clive was given command of this expedition.

Clive moved out of Madras in October 1756 and by January 1757 had captured Calcutta. A treaty with Siraj-ud-Daulah followed in February in which he restored the British presence in Bengal. The treaty was a stroke of luck for the British, who were now in a fierce conflict with the French. The French, who had a presence in Bengal in Chandranagar, could ally themselves with the nawab at any moment. But the British moved fast; they had forced the French garrison to surrender by March 1757.¹¹ All this time Siraj-ud-Daulah had hesitated. In January Ahmad Shah Durrani had sacked Delhi, and the nawab, fearing his Afghan brethren more than the British, sought peace with the British. But the British had disposed of the French and were in no mood to compromise. Despite the treaty they wanted to renew the conflict and found an excuse when another member of the nawab's family requested British aid to overthrow Siraj-ud-Daulah and claim the throne for himself. Clive immediately agreed, noting that the "universally hated [nawab] would be overthrown whether we gave our consent or not."¹² Charging the nawab with violation of the February 1757 treaty, Clive moved out of Chandranagar with approximately 3,000 troops and established himself at Plassey (Palashi in Urdu), 23 miles south of Murshidabad, where the nawab was already stationed with 50,000 men.¹³

Despite the overwhelming odds Clive decided to attack because he knew beforehand that Mir Jafar, one of the nawab's commanders, would not fight. In fact, only one of the commanders, Mir Muin-ud-Din, remained loyal to the nawab. Siraj-ud-Daulah himself had only a small contingent of 2,000 soldiers. At the start of the battle, when the British attacked, only Muin-ud-Din's unit moved to challenge them. Although damp gunpowder and devastating British fire hampered his efforts, Muin continued the advance until he was killed. Nevertheless, he managed to force the British to retreat to the mango groves from where they had started their advance. If the nawab's entire army had advanced at the same time, the British might have been crushed, but two other commanders, Yar Lutf Khan and Rai Durlab, along with Mir Jafar, kept their forces out of the fray. At this point the nawab fled the field, and the conspirators later murdered him as he fled Bengal.¹⁴ In due time, Mir Jafar was established as nawab and a British puppet. With total control of Bengal, the British had the foothold they needed to consolidate and expand their gains in India.

The military engagement at Plassey is not particularly notable in military terms; nevertheless, it further reinforced the superiority of the British com-

manders and soldiers (there were only 1,000 British soldiers at Plassey) over the disorganized Indian forces.

The Establishment of the British Military System in India

Besides securing the British right to establish a trading post in Surat, Sir Thomas Roe's successful visit to Emperor Jahangir in Agra also resulted in permission for British merchants to bear arms.¹⁵ Gradually, the British employed large numbers of local peons, or guards, to protect their factories.¹⁶ As British posts spread to the south and the east, large forts, including Fort William in Calcutta and Fort Saint George in Madras, came into being, and, as a consequence, royal charters granted in 1661 and 1669 allowed the company to enlist soldiers locally.¹⁷ Bengal was the first Presidency to establish its own native forces. Between 1668 and 1683 it created two companies of native soldiers with twenty-one cannons.¹⁸ Bombay followed suit with two Rajput companies. In 1661 400 royal troops were sent to the city for its protection, and Bombay formed the first European regiment in India, the Bombay Fusiliers, in 1668.¹⁹ Madras experienced a similar evolution at a later date. Madras began setting up large military forces only in the eighteenth century during the Anglo-French wars. In 1748 Major Lawrence received command of all of the East India Company's forces in India. He established a Madras European regiment and recruited 2,000 Indian sepoys, which he used only for guard duties.²⁰ Bombay too began to raise large local forces, recruiting up to 2,000 men in Surat, mainly Arabs and Turks.²¹ Bengal followed suit with a force of between five and seven companies. The British also created an artillery company to support each of the Presidency (Bengal, Bombay, and Madras) armies, with Bengal getting the first in 1749.²²

However, from 1757 to 1767, under Clive's leadership, the company's military organization, beginning with that of the Bengal Presidency, underwent a dramatic expansion and modernization. After the battle of Plassey Clive realized that the local infantry, commanded by Indian officers, was an ill-trained and undisciplined force.²³ He established a regiment of Bengal native infantrymen known as the Lal Paltan (literally, the "red bunch" because of their red uniforms), commanded exclusively by Europeans.²⁴ In 1761 the Bengal army had 1,200 Europeans and 8,500 sepoys.²⁵ Madras partially copied this system by using European and local officers to command its nine battalions of sepoys.²⁶ By 1759 the Madras army consisted of two European battalions, six sepoy battalions, and two artillery companies supported by a regiment of British regulars.²⁷

The evolution of the cavalry occurred slowly largely due to shortages and

the tremendous costs involved in obtaining good horses. The British controlled only the fringes of the prime horse-trading areas in western and central India and thus relied upon the few horses that trickled down to them after the Marathas, Mughals, and Rajputs had their pick of the best horses. Nevertheless, in 1760 the company financed two troops of dragoons and one of hussars, comprising about 200 men, under Maj. John Caillaud in Bengal.²⁸ In 1762 the company recruited two risalas, or squadrons, of mainly irregular Mughal cavalry.²⁹ Madras formed its own regular cavalry in 1784, and by 1788 it had four regiments of Madras native cavalry.³⁰

However, Clive's infantry reforms within the Bengal army had the greatest long-term impact upon the Indian army.³¹ He established the principle that Europeans exclusively would command local soldiers, a formula the army strictly adhered to until the end of World War I. The "new" army Clive organized met its first real test in 1764 in the battle of Buxar, the Britishers' first act of open military conquest in India.

Buxar, 1764

In the aftermath of the battle of Plassey, the British installed Mir Jafar on the throne of Bengal. Unfortunately for them, this erstwhile puppet soon set about establishing his independence. In 1759 he concluded a treaty with the Dutch when they invaded Bengal with a force from Batavia. The British, however, defeated the Dutch on the Bedara plains on 25 November 1759.³² The British then replaced Mir Jafar with his son-in-law Mir Kasim as the new nawab in September 1760. But matters only worsened, as the British treated their new puppet ruler in an even more humiliating manner. A Mr. Ellis, the British agent in the state of Patna, seized control of the city of Patna in June 1763 to stifle the nawab's bid for independence. In response, the nawab recaptured the city and put to death the unfortunate Ellis and his English compatriots. The English in Calcutta then reestablished Mir Jafar on the throne, making him nawab once again. At the same time, the company sent out an army under Maj. Thomas Adams to defeat Mir Kasim. Adams quickly took Murshidabad on 23 July. Additional forces joined him there, bringing his strength to 1,000 Europeans and 4,000 sepoys. On 2 August 1763 Adams's army reached the plain of Gheria some distance from Sooty, where Mir Kasim had entrenched himself. However, upon seeing the small size of the British forces, Mir Kasim's army of approximately 30,000 men marched out to give battle. Sumroo, the Indian name of an Alsatian mercenary named Walter Reinhardt, and Marak, an Armenian mercenary, commanded the force.³³ Their regular infantry brigades stood in the center. On

their right stood some 8,000 cavalry and 12,000 irregular infantry, while on their left, almost standing in the Bhagirathi River, stood a small body of irregular horse. The British deployed with their European infantry in the center and the sepoys on either flank. As the two sides engaged in an artillery duel, a force of Mir Kasim's cavalry attacked the British left flank, shattering a sepoy battalion and almost wiping it out. Through this gap more cavalry poured in and attacked the European infantry from the rear, seizing two guns. But the British quickly countered, recovered the guns, and launched a charge. The nawab's forces broke under this impetuous assault and fled the field, leaving twenty-three guns and much munition.

Mir Kasim then decided to face the British from a well-fortified position at Oundha Nala, a pass 5 miles south of Rajmahal between the Rajmahal Hills and the Ganges. The pass itself was a mile wide. Within this narrow strip of land Mir Kasim threw up massive earthworks, up to 60 feet thick and 10 feet high. To complicate matters for an attacker, the earthworks were positioned in front of a deep morass. After months of preparation, Adams placed a battery 500 yards from the fortifications and opened fire on 3 September. The bombardment had little effect, and all seemed lost until a European deserter from Kasim's camp showed the British a path through the impenetrable morass that led to the nawab's right flank. On the night of the 4th Adams sent a portion of his army through the morass and captured the stockade, dominating the fortifications. The remaining British forces then followed. Taken completely by surprise, the nawab's army was slaughtered and dispersed. Mir Kasim fled with the survivors to the neighboring kingdom of Avadh (British spelling, Oudh or Audh).³⁴

When Mir Kasim's army retreated into Avadh the state's nawab, Shuja-ud-Daulah, agreed to cooperate with Mir Kasim in return for monthly payments and the promise that he could use Mir Kasim's army in time of need. With this agreement signed the two allies marched on to Banaras, where the local raja joined them, and prepared to cross the Ganges in March 1764. After some confusion in their own ranks, the British forces, under the command of Maj. John Carnac, moved out to confront the allies.³⁵ However, the British army failed to prevent the allied army from crossing the Sone River, and Carnac fell back on Patna on 24 March. Mir Kasim and Shuja-ud-Daulah followed closely and took up positions right against the city's defenses. In Patna Carnac had 19,000 men, including 1,000 Europeans, 12,000 of Mir Jafar's soldiers, and 6,000 sepoys. When the allies learned that additional British forces were on their way they initiated the battle on 3 May 1764. Shuja-ud-Daulah's forces, with little if any support from Mir Kasim's regulars, launched the attack. Despite many concerted attempts, Shuja could not overwhelm the British de-

fenses. On 30 May his forces suddenly broke and fell back on the village of Buxar, but, inexplicably, Carnac did not pursue them.

On 28 June Maj. Hector Munro, who brought fresh troops with him, replaced Carnac. He gave the order to advance on 6 October, and by the 22nd the two armies confronted each other on the Buxar plain. The situation for Mir Kasim had changed rather dramatically in the interim. He had run out of money, his forces had joined Shuja's army, and Shuja had imprisoned him. The joint army, now under Shuja, was joined by about 40,000 men and the raja of Banaras. Shuja deployed this new allied army behind strong entrenchments, with the Ganges River securing the left flank and the Torah Canal securing the right. Munro's army consisted of 1,000 Europeans, including 70 horse (probably scouts), 5,500 sepoy, and 1,000 Mughal cavalry. The British deployed in two lines, with British units in the center and two sepoy battalions on each flank. The cavalry was divided into two divisions; one guarded the baggage (supported by two sepoy companies), while the other, along with a small European force, formed the reserve behind the center and the front line. The commanders deployed the artillery in batteries interspersed among the lines. Shuja, noting the small size of the British army, moved out to meet it. His right flank rested on the banks of the Ganges and occupied the fort and village of Buxar. It consisted of a division led by Beni Bahadur with several infantry battalions led by European officers. A contingent of Shuja's household cavalry, the Sheikzadi (descendants of Muslims who colonized India from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries), commanded by Sheikh Ghulam Khadar, supported them. In the center were located the trained brigades of Sumroo and Marak, consisting of eight infantry battalions with artillery deployed on either flank and 6,000 irregular cavalry and infantry commanded by Kuli Khan. The raja of Banaras was located on the right flank with a large force of Rohilla horse and foot and some 5,000 Afghan cavalry, many of whom had fought at Panipat in 1761.

The battle commenced with both sides advancing on each other after an artillery bombardment. Shuja's Sheikzadi cavalry attacked and captured the British baggage train, but the British, although suffering heavy losses, repulsed the Afghan cavalry. In the center a ferocious confrontation developed, with Sumroo and Marak's regular battalions standing their ground against the British. Shuja had also deployed a strong force in a grove of trees, and this unit shattered a sepoy battalion, seriously threatening the British advance. But Munro quickly secured the threatened right wing with some first-line European infantry and two additional sepoy battalions and then cleared the grove with their bayonets. At this point, without any orders or warning, Kuli Khan, who was supporting the center, flung himself and his cavalry at the

British left wing. He was quickly killed, and his cavalry were flung back in disorder. This spectacular defeat caused Shuja's line, which up until that time had been standing firm, to retreat. Munro, sensing victory, gave the order for a general advance. Shuja desperately tried to form a new line to the rear, but Beni Bahadur's units were in full flight by this time. The retreat quickly turned into a rout as the defeated army tried to cross the Torah stream.³⁶

An examination of the campaigns of Mir Kasim and Shuja-ud-Daulah reveals that Indian armies increasingly relied upon artillery and musket-armed infantry rather than the traditional cavalry, a trend that had been established at Panipat. Significantly, the presence of infantry trained and led by Europeans in Mir Kasim's army indicates that Indian rulers were rapidly utilizing such formations. This practice, which originated with the nizam of Hyderabad, spread to the major Indian powers as they came under increasing British pressure and sought to emulate their highly successful military organization. In spite of these changes, the campaign in Bengal had shown that British infantry, especially the all-European units, were markedly superior to the Indian allies' European-led and -trained units. Despite having a tremendous superiority in artillery, approximately 100 to 28, Shuja's guns had little impact upon the battle due to the poor training of the Indian gunners. The Indian infantry also was poorly trained and was reluctant to close in with bayonets when the British attacked in similar fashion.³⁷ Indeed, the hallmark of these battles is the tremendous success achieved by even small units of organized European infantry when they advanced with bayonets. The Indians, in contrast, preferred to engage in close individual combat with the tulwar, or curved scimitar, a slashing weapon that created a offensive-defensive slashing zone to their front and sides. The disadvantage of this weapon is that it prevented the Indians from operating in concert and in closely ranked formations, thus considerably diminishing their effect on disciplined European troops. The latter used the shock effect (and flank security) of closed ranks and the longer reach of their pikelike bayonets to sweep the Indians' loose formations from the field. Finally, the bayonet as a stabbing weapon was more likely to create a mortal wound than the slashing sword. The latter, unless it was used by an attacker against an unprotected neck or head, usually left the victim with horrible, albeit survivable, lacerations and cuts.

The one area where the British suffered a distinct disadvantage compared to the Indians (in addition to numbers) was in cavalry. Although the Indian light cavalry could do little against even the hastily constructed British infantry square (infantry units formed a square shape with bayonets presented to repel cavalry charges), it did highlight the British need for their own cavalry. Buxar also established the reputation of the Indian sepoy units, who

suffered more casualties in proportion to their numbers than their European counterparts (approximately 5,800 to 800). Clive's military reforms had paid off handsomely: the British no longer hesitated to thrust their sepoys into the thick of even the most desperate battles. In the House of Commons, Munro declared that "sepoys properly disciplined and led on with the Europeans are good soldiers and will do anything."³⁸ Buxar was also the first battle that the British fought for territory in India. Unlike Plassey, it was not a battle to install a favorite nawab on the throne; instead, it was an outright attempt to seize control of Bengal. Acquisition of this populous and lucrative region gave the British the ideal base from which to conquer the remainder of India.

Buxar, however, did not automatically signify the capitulation of the surviving powers in northern India. The rulers of Avadh and powerful zamindars like the raja of Banaras began to expand and reorganize their forces to match the British. Shuja-ud-Daulah, appalled by his Mughal cavalry's ineffectiveness against the British, began to reduce their numbers in favor of infantry.³⁹ He organized these soldiers along European lines and hired French officers to train them. They were subject to strict discipline and paid regularly, the latter a requirement in order to compete against the British, who offered the most stable careers for Indian recruits.⁴⁰ By 1768 Shuja had 70,000 sepoys in seventy *paltans* (groups), which were grouped into divisions called *Telingas* and *Jhelingas*.⁴¹ He armed the troops with firelocks, matchlocks, and cannons, all made near his palace in Faizabad under French supervision.⁴² Military governors, or *faujdar*s, received orders to dispatch a certain number of recruits (mainly Hindu peasants) from each *pargana*, or district, for military service.⁴³ In addition to these peasant sepoys, Shuja also employed mercenary clans such as the *Gosains* (warrior ascetics) and the *Mewatis*, whom the Mughals had periodically employed as auxiliaries.⁴⁴ However, the new army never saw combat against the British. The latter quickly imposed a number of treaties on Shuja and his successor, Asaf-ud-Daulah, thereby considerably emasculating the budding army and ultimately rendering it ineffective.

More effective opposition to the British domination of northern India came from the powerful Hindu zamindari, or landowning, family in Banaras. Mansa Ram, an assistant to the Mughal governor of Banaras, Meer Rustam Ali Khan, founded the "kingdom" of Banaras. Using his newfound power, Mansa Ram gradually put his clansmen into positions of power and soon controlled the district. He proved so influential that Rustam Ali got him the title *raja* from the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah.⁴⁵ Like the Mughal and the Maratha armies, the Banaras zamindari recruited its forces from a broad base, which reduced the *raja*'s dependence on his immediate clansmen.⁴⁶ The Banaras army was based on three tiers. The *Bhumihar* elite and the re-

cruits from the raja's Bhumihar Brahmin kin network occupied the highest position. The second tier consisted of Afghan and Rajput risaldars, or troop leaders, most of whom had served in the Mughal army. The third tier, or the rank and file, consisted of the zamindar auxiliary forces. This heterogeneous force helped balance the various ethnic groups within and outside of the army. It also aided the raja in keeping control over these disparate forces. The drawback to the system was its decentralized nature, with recruitment and training falling in the hands of the risaldars, who were mostly clan leaders.⁴⁷ Cheyt Singh, Mansa Ram's grandson, expanded the army's peasant base by extending his recruitment to the Bhumihar zamindaris of Banaras and northern Bihar in order to diminish his Bhumihar kinsmen and the power of the Afghan risaldars. According to C. A. Bayly, as many as 100,000 Bhumihar Brahmin clansmen militarily supported the Banaras raja.⁴⁸ Later, Cheyt Singh extended his peasant recruitment to the Rajput zamindaris of Banaras and Avadh.⁴⁹ Seema Alavi believes that the Banaras raja's expansion of peasant levies partly was in response to similar recruitment carried out by Shuja-ud-Daulah in neighboring Avadh. However, whereas Shuja used the administrative institutions of the faujdar and the aumil to raise his army, Cheyt Singh utilized his clan and religious affiliations in the countryside to recruit his soldiers.⁵⁰ On the eve of his rebellion against the East India Company, Cheyt Singh's forces stood at 7,690 men, including 700 household troops, both horse and foot, 1,150 sipahis (soldiers), 1,800 matchlock men, a large number of important levies armed by the zamindars, and 1,700 Afghan cavalry. During the insurrection, his army rose to 22,190, with most men coming from the region's various Rajput lineages and Bhumihar zamindaris.⁵¹

Hyder Ali and State Formation in Mysore

On 20 February 1772 Warren Hastings arrived in Calcutta to begin his appointment as governor, and he immediately started consolidating the East India Company's hold over the region. Together with the nawab of Avadh, the British fought a war in 1774 against the Afghans of Rohilkhand to the north of Avadh, which they subsequently annexed. The British, in the meantime, took advantage of internal dissensions within Avadh and gained control over the administration until the nawab, Asaf-ud-Daulah, paid off his debts to the British and committed himself to a firm alliance with them. The British then installed his successor, Nawab Saadat Ali Khan (1798–1814), the son of the late nawab Shuja-ud-Daulah, on the throne, and thus he remained under their complete control.⁵² With Bengal now completely secure, the British turned their attention to southern India, where Hyder Ali, the ruler of Mysore, challenged their forces.

Hyder Ali was a soldier of fortune who had entered the service of Nanjraj, Mysore's Hindu ruler. By 1761 Hyder had taken over the reins of power from Nanjraj. The latter had exhausted his treasury in a fruitless alliance with the British during a war (1750–55) against the neighboring kingdom of Karnatik, in whose territory Madras was situated. As soon as he took over the throne, Hyder began to consolidate his power base through a process of conquest and subjugation of the region's *polygars*, or local warlords. He extended his kingdom from 84 *gulies*, or districts, to 144 *gulies*. He then subdivided this area into Mughal-style subahdaries of varying size. The governing subahdars had full power, military and civil, to govern their respective provinces. In every district, an *aumil* and a deputy subahdar assisted them.⁵³

However, establishing a strong military force remained Hyder's immediate and main concern. Just prior to taking power, Hyder had clashed briefly with the British in 1760 when they tried to assist his rivals in Mysore. Although his reign began amid tension with the British, Hyder tried to enlist their help in his war against the Marathas in the north that began in October 1763. The war ended in 1765, with Hyder receiving no aid from the British. He also wanted to parley with the British in order to obtain European firearms with which to equip his rapidly expanding army. In 1763 he promised to continue the privileges the British had enjoyed under the Wodeyar dynasty provided they supplied him with 7,000 muskets.⁵⁴ The company stalled for time, noting its long-term policy of never selling arms to Indian powers or assisting them with arms. Undaunted, Hyder directly applied to the Bombay government for 3,000–4,000 muskets.⁵⁵ The Bombay government decided that it would supply Hyder with a token 500 muskets to prevent him from "throw[ing] himself into the arms of the French."⁵⁶ Hyder continued to ask the British for more muskets, but he did not receive further supplies. The British disregard for their various treaty agreements with Mysore and the growing distrust between the British government in Madras and Hyder eventually propelled Hyder into a French alliance, just as the British had feared.

The First Anglo-Mysore War

Although relations with Hyder had deteriorated, the British achieved success in Karnatik. Fortunately for them, the nawab, Muhammad Ali, placed by the British on the throne, proved rather pliant and allowed the British to dictate his foreign policy. Because Hyder's rise to power in Mysore made the nawab apprehensive, he put together an alliance with the nizam of Hyderabad and the Marathas to crush the upstart Hyder. However, Hyder was a consummate diplomat: he bought off the Marathas with money and territory and convinced the nizam to come over to his side.⁵⁷

On 25 August 1767 the combined armies of Mysore and Hyderabad entered Karnatik with some 65,000 men. Hyder had at his disposal 12,800 cavalry, 18,000 infantry, 210 Europeans, and 49 cannons.⁵⁸ Throughout the campaign Hyder's forces bore the brunt of the fighting, while the nizam's forces took little part in the engagements. The British, who were the real military power in Karnatik, had only 600 European soldiers, 5,000 sepoy, 30 cavalry, and 14 cannons under Col. Joseph Smith.⁵⁹ Despite this, they inflicted a sharp defeat upon Hyder on 2 September at Changama, causing 1,500 casualties to 170 of their own. On the 25th Smith, who had been reinforced by Col. James Wood and now had a combined force of 1,300 Europeans, 8,000 sepoy, and 30 guns, inflicted another defeat upon the allies at Tiruvannamali.⁶⁰ The nizam again took no part in the battle and in fact joined the British after Hyder retreated. In January 1768 the British, operating in two divisions under Colonels Wood and Smith, forced Hyder onto the Bangalore plain and reduced many of his forts. Following the defeats of Changama, Tiruvannamali, and Vaniyambali, Hyder avoided direct confrontation with the British and turned instead to a campaign based upon seizing British supplies, burning crops and villages, and seizing cattle. So accomplished was he in the latter that he rendered vast areas surrounding Karnatik desolate with "not an inhabitant or hut . . . seen in a day's journey."⁶¹ Not wanting to directly confront the British forces, Hyder tried to draw out smaller contingents from the main body to wipe them out. He almost managed to accomplish this when a contingent under Colonel Wood was sent to recapture the mountain fortress of Malwagal. Hyder cut off and isolated Wood's detachment of 4,000 sepoy and 700 European soldiers along with their supplies and artillery. Wood, fearing encirclement, panicked, dumped his stores, and retreated rapidly. On the 21st, however, Hyder surrounded him. Only the timely arrival of a relieving force under a Major Fitzgerald prevented the certain annihilation of the British force. Col. Ross Lang, who replaced the panic-stricken Wood, dispatched a force of 5,000 men under Fitzgerald to track down Hyder. This plan proved to be a mistake, for not only did Hyder easily evade Fitzgerald, but he also isolated and wiped out a force of 50 Europeans and 200 sepoy. The tide of the war appeared to shift in Hyder's favor, and he soon recovered most of the territories he had lost to the British. The latter, seemingly stunned at this sudden reversal, tried to seek peace, but the war resumed on 6 March 1769. Hyder, now possessing a good understanding of his British foe, reacted with alacrity. He positioned most of his force 140 miles south of Madras to decoy the British army under Colonel Smith while he marched north with 6,000 cavalry and only 200 picked infantry to Madras, where he amazingly arrived in less than three days, on 29 March 1769. With the defenseless city at his

mercy, he negotiated a very favorable peace treaty, bringing to a conclusion the first Anglo-Mysore War.⁶²

The Second Anglo-Mysore War

In the wake of the treaty Hyder once again found himself embroiled in conflict with the Marathas. The British immediately violated the terms of the Madras treaty by refusing to give him aid. Nevertheless, Hyder, by using his diplomatic and military skills, managed to keep the Marathas at bay. The Marathas' severe internal conflict in 1775, stemming from British support for the pretender to the office of peshwa, Raghunathrao or Raghoba, also aided Hyder. The British were also occupied by other problems. As a result of the American Revolution, by 1778 the British were again at war with the French. In India the British captured Pondicherry on 19 October 1778. Flush with victory over the French, the British governor of Madras, Stephen Rumbold Lushington (appointed 13 February 1778), proposed capturing French-controlled Mahe on the west coast. Hyder could not allow a British conquest at his own doorstep. Furthermore, he placed tremendous strategic importance on Mahe because he obtained his French-supplied arms and munition from this port. Ignoring Hyder's concerns and warnings, Rumbold captured Mahe on 19 March, just before Hyder's army was due to arrive to support the French.⁶³ Hyder now set about forming a confederacy against the British. He already had French support, but now the Marathas also joined him. Even the pretender Raghunathrao, angered by the lack of British support for his cause, joined the alliance. In the face of such overwhelming support for Hyder, the opportunistic nizam of Hyderabad decided to quickly follow suit. A thoroughly alarmed Madras government sent an emissary, a Mr. Gray, to Hyder's capital in Seringapatam to negotiate a new treaty. Hyder now had little confidence in treaties with the British and with Rumbold in particular, and he did not respond to Gray's entreaties. In Madras Governor Rumbold was dismissed for starting the war.

In July 1780 Hyder invaded Karnatik with an army of 80,000, mostly cavalry.⁶⁴ The total forces available to the British in Madras amounted to 26,065 men, of whom 15,000 belonged to the nawab of Karnatik.⁶⁵ Hyder initiated the war by laying siege to some British forts in northern Arcot. In response the British sent a force of 5,209 men to Arcot to raise the siege. Hyder then sent part of his army under his son Tippu to intercept Col. William Baille at Guntur, some 145 miles south of Madras, and prevent him from joining with now Col. Hector Munro, commander in chief at Madras. Tippu's cavalry attacked Baille on 5 September at Parambakam but was beaten off.⁶⁶ On

the 9th a Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher joined Baille with 1,007 men of the Seventy-third Regiment, including 301 Europeans.⁶⁷ On hearing this, Hyder reinforced Tippu with his main army the very same night. Because Baille now had a total of 3,820 men, including 86 European officers and 508 European soldiers, he was confident of victory.⁶⁸

The following morning Baille broke camp and moved out, only to come under heavy fire from Hyder's guns. Baille then formed his force into a long oblong "square," with all the baggage in the middle, and slowly began to move forward. At first the formation beat off all attacks, but an explosion in the munition tumbrels within it caused the formation to waver. Hyder's Maratha light cavalry attacked the square in a flash and broke the formation's front. Hyder's remaining cavalry poured through, and within moments the battle was over and Baille had surrendered. His casualties were heavy; 36 of 86 European officers died, as did 300 out of 508 European infantry.⁶⁹ The losses notwithstanding, this was the British army's most crushing defeat in India at that time. Other British forces reacted instantaneously. Munro retreated rapidly to Madras, abandoning his baggage and throwing his cannons into the Conjeeveram water tank to speed his retreat in addition to losing some 500 men. At this point when he had the British at his mercy, Hyder for some inexplicable reason refused to march on Madras but turned instead to capture the fortress of Arcot, which he did on 3 November.⁷⁰

Hyder's decision gave the British time to shore up their forces in the south. Hastings, reacting quickly to the frantic appeals from Madras, dispatched Sir Eyre Coote with all available men to Madras; the force arrived there on 5 November.⁷¹ On the 17th he moved south, retook Pondicherry from the French, and also lifted the sieges on several British forts in the area. Hyder followed Coote's army and learned on the 25th that a French fleet under Chevalier d'Orves had arrived off the coast, thus cutting off Coote's overseas supply line to Bengal. Hyder then positioned himself to cut off Coote from the grain-producing interior and simply waited to starve out the British. He almost succeeded; in the first half of 1781 Coote's army, which required 450,000 bags of rice to feed the men, received only 125,000. The situation in the second half of the year was even worse, with the army obtaining only 90,000 bags of rice.⁷² Unfortunately for Hyder, the French fleet suddenly departed from its blockading position on 15 February, and the British rushed in the desperately needed supplies from Madras.⁷³ Coote then moved close to the village of Porto-Novo near the sea on the northern banks of the Vallar River. On 27 June he learned that Hyder had arrived there with an army of 40,000. Hyder deployed his army astride the Cuddalore road, with the right wing resting on a height and the left hugging the sand banks near the coast.

Coote had at his disposal 8,476 men, of whom 2,070 were Europeans. After careful inspection Coote saw that Hyder's left was very weak, since it was unfortified. He immediately dispatched Gen. James Stuart with the second column to turn this flank while he sought to engage the enemy's attention with the first column. The British carried out the deployment with precision, but Hyder, immediately recognizing the British tactics, reinforced the weak point. Stuart attacked twice but was repulsed. Hyder launched a cavalry counterattack, which Stuart repulsed with great difficulty. Just as a second such attack was begun, the cavalry commander, Mir Sahib, was killed, and a British schooner engaged the massed cavalry with cannon fire. These events broke up what could have been an overwhelming cavalry charge. Stuart attacked again and this time succeeded in breaking Hyder's left flank, leaving Hyder with little option but to retreat.⁷⁴

Porto-Novo was an important battle, for it decided once and for all the fate of Madras.⁷⁵ Although Hyder fought on, the aging warrior never again directly confronted the British. On 7 December 1782, at the age of sixty, an ailing Hyder Ali passed away. After his death the war continued until the Treaty of Mangalore on 11 March 1784 ended the hostilities.⁷⁶ The Marathas had already made peace with the British in May 1782, as had the French in 1783. According to the terms of the treaty the British agreed to evacuate the territory of Mysore, while Tippu did the same with Karnatik.

The Third Anglo-Mysore War

After his father's death Tippu inherited a war-ravaged kingdom. After a brief war against the Marathas and the nizam of Hyderabad in 1786–87, he was once again drawn into conflict with the British, who were determined to eliminate Mysore. The conflict was caused by a third party – the small kingdom of Travancore on the southwestern tip of India. The king of Travancore, Raja Rama Varma, provoked Tippu by allowing British forces to be stationed on his soil. Matters came to a head in 1788–89, when the raja gave safe haven to rebels from Mysore. After a series of border clashes, Tippu invaded Travancore on 12 April, brushing aside its ineffectual army. The two British battalions in Travancore, which had been reinforced with three more battalions under a Colonel Hartley from Bombay, were forced to fall back on Travancore as its army dissolved at the border. Tippu continued to reduce fort after fort until he heard that the British planned to invade Mysore, at which point he returned home.

This latest British attempt to crush Tippu had its roots in British prime minister William Pitt's India Act, which passed Parliament in 1784. This act

greatly strengthened the post of the governor-general in India, an appointment that was henceforth solely the Crown's prerogative. Accordingly, King George III appointed Charles Cornwallis as governor-general, and he arrived in India in September 1786 armed with considerable powers and a desire to redeem his honor, which had been lost to the "colonials" at Yorktown. Despite specific advice from the board of directors of the East India Company "to adopt a pacific defensive system," Cornwallis decided to cut Tippu down to size.⁷⁷ However, realizing the extent of Tippu's military prowess, he sought "to form an alliance with the Marattas against Tipoo our common enemy."⁷⁸ At the same time, he began overhauling the company's military establishment so that by December 1787 he could write, "The company's armies are ready in all the provinces."⁷⁹ Meanwhile, Sir Charles Malet, the British agent in Poona, had by 1 June 1790 managed to secure an offensive-defensive alliance between the peshwa, the nizam of Hyderabad, and the company. All of these moves coincided well with Tippu's attack on Travancore, a British ally. According to the terms of the alliance, the Marathas and the nizam were to invade Mysore immediately with an army of at least 25,000; furthermore, should Cornwallis request cavalry, they were to provide him with such a force within a month.⁸⁰

Tippu stood alone. Even the French dared not intervene on his behalf. However, in spite of the alliance against Tippu, the British initially fought the third Anglo-Mysore War without their allies. The British, having long plotted a careful offensive plan, made the first move. According to their plans, Gen. William Meadows, the governor of Madras, would enter western Mysore through the Gajalhati Pass and occupy Coimbatore Province. General Abercrombie, the governor of Bombay, was to attack from the coast and occupy Kanara and Malabar. Finally, a third force under Colonel Maxwell would invade Baramahal in northwestern Mysore. Initially, everything went according to plan, as General Meadows's advance force under Colonel Floyd drove back Tippu's garrisons through the Gajalhati Pass and occupied Satyamangalalm. Several forts in the area had fallen to the British by 22 August 1790. Tippu's reaction was characteristically swift and forceful. Having arrived back in Seringapatam from Travancore, he mobilized his forces and with an army of 40,000 men sans baggage force-marched to the Gajalhati Pass, descending it swiftly and undetected.⁸¹ He surprised Colonel Floyd at Satyamangalalm and forced him to retreat to Coimbatore. On 13 September he again attacked Floyd's force and inflicted some 550 casualties but failed to follow and crush the retreating British. At this point all the British forces in the region, including Meadows, Floyd, and Stuart, fell back on Coimbatore.⁸² Tippu then turned his attention to Colonel Maxwell in Baramahal, but Meadows joined

Maxwell with his forces, and brief skirmishing was all that came of this move. With all of his attention absorbed on the east Tippu was unable to prevent General Abercrombie from taking Malabar after a sea landing at Tellicherry in December 1790. Despite this success, the main British attack in the west was a disaster, as Cornwallis, who dismissed Meadows and took personal command of all forces in the field, had concentrated all of his forces in the west at Vellore and had issued marching orders on 11 February 1791.⁸³ The British Grand Army moved against Bangalore, which fell to it on 21 March 1791. Here Cornwallis established a temporary cantonment, and the nizam of Hyderabad joined him on 13 April with some 15,000 men. The joint force left Bangalore on 4 May 1791, but Mysorean light cavalry constantly harried them, and a series of short actions were fought in the Karighatta Hills some 9 miles from Seringapatam, an island fortress in the Kaveri River. Tippu's forces then retreated into the Seringapatam fortress, which the British tried unsuccessfully to storm, suffering heavy losses in the process. By now Cornwallis's supply situation was becoming rather acute, forcing him to lift the siege on 20 May and leave for Bangalore. He had to abandon most of his supply train, as all of his cattle had starved to death or had been slaughtered for food. Despite appeals from his officers, Tippu did not march out of Seringapatam to attack the retreating British forces.

As Cornwallis established his temporary camp in Bangalore in April the Marathas finally opened their northern offensive. Nana Phadnavis sent a force of 12,000 cavalry and 5,000 infantry to open the offensive. The Marathas laid siege to the northern fortress of Dharwar, which fell to them after a six-month siege on 4 April 1781. With Dharwar captured, the Maratha army, with new forces under Raghunathrao, stormed into northern Mysore. At this time Cornwallis's forces were in dire straits and were overjoyed to join up with the Marathas at Melukote.⁸⁴ The Marathas, with their vast stores and mobile bazaars, provisioned Cornwallis until he received much-needed supplies from Madras. On 31 January 1792 the combined allied armies, now under Cornwallis, were reviewed in Bangalore. The British had 22,000 men and 86 guns, including 42 siege pieces. The nizam's forces under Prince Sikander Jha had 18,000 men, and the Marathas under Haripant had 12,000 men (mostly cavalry), but Parashuram Bhau was to join them with 20,000 men.⁸⁵

Tippu awaited the attack in a prepared position to the north of his island fortress with some 40,000 infantry and 100 cannons. On the night of 6 February 1792 Cornwallis gave the order to attack.⁸⁶ The attack met with total success, and Tippu's forces retreated into the fortress. Surrounded on all sides, he began peace negotiations on 24 February 1792 and then signed the Treaty of Seringapatam.⁸⁷ The treaty was a devastating blow to Tippu. At one

stroke he lost his kingdom's significant revenue-producing districts, including the Baramahal, Dundigal (which included the fertile region of the Doab), and Salem. In the west he lost the spice-rich Malabar, which included the important ports of Calicut and Cannanore.⁸⁸

The Fourth Anglo-Mysore War

In May 1798 India's new governor-general, Richard Colley Wellesley, 2nd Earl of Mornington, arrived to assume his office. His overall mission was to consolidate the East India Company's position in India. The one perceived obstacle to this goal was, of course, Tippu Sultan, the "Tiger of Mysore." In the aftermath of the harsh Treaty of Seringapatam, Tippu had managed to engineer a partial recovery, especially with his army. At the same time he reestablished contact with France, this time dealing with the Jacobins, who referred to him as their "citizen Prince."⁸⁹ On hearing of this relationship Wellesley, who probably had been waiting for just such an excuse, ordered General Harris, the commander in chief of the Coromandel Coast, to begin gathering an army.⁹⁰ As Cornwallis had done before him, Wellesley easily secured the cooperation of the nizam of Hyderabad, who by this time was a British dependent.⁹¹ The Marathas, however, were a different case altogether. Although the peshwa had agreed to an alliance, none of the sirdars wanted to leave their provinces. Finally, Parashuram Bhau agreed to join the British war effort in exchange for territory captured from Mysore.⁹² With his military preparations and alliances secure by November 1798, Wellesley openly confronted Tippu about his so-called alliance with the French.⁹³ The governor-general knew that the French could not send aid to Tippu because of the destruction of their fleet in Alexandria.⁹⁴ Without waiting for a reply, Wellesley left for Madras, from where on 3 February 1799 he ordered Generals Harris and Stuart to invade Mysore and lay siege to Seringapatam.⁹⁵

Harris and the Madras army set out from Vellore on 14 February 1799 with 15,000 infantry, 2,600 cavalry, and 100 cannons.⁹⁶ Arthur Wellesley, the governor-general's brother, joined him at Ambur on the 20th with a force of 10,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry from the nizam of Hyderabad. The Bombay army under Stuart moved out of Cannanore on 21 February with 6,420 men. The British commanders also expected the nizam of Hyderabad and the Marathas to provide some 25,000 men each. As the Madras army advanced into Mysore, Tippu's lieutenants, Sayyid Sahib and Purniah, proved unable or unwilling to hinder Harris's advance. Indeed, evidence suggests that the British had bought off these and many other important officials in Tippu's government.⁹⁷ Tippu himself marched out of Seringapatam to con-

front Harris at Malvalli on 18 March. Tippu first attacked the British right wing with cavalry and the left with infantry, but the British repulsed these, and Tippu had to retreat into Seringapatam, which the British surrounded by mid-April. On the 21st, after Tippu refused to reply to a humiliating treaty that the British sought to impose upon him, the British began to bombard the fort.⁹⁸ A breach was created on 3 May, and General Baird was ordered to storm it the next day with his unit of 2,494 European soldiers and 1,892 sepoy. Despite stiff resistance, the breach was carried at the point of the bayonet. Tippu died fighting on the ramparts alongside his men.⁹⁹

The Mysore Army under Hyder and Tippu

Hyder Ali's military system, which had so terrified the British, was based upon light cavalry. Of all the Indian rulers who set up European-style units with the help of the French, none enjoyed a closer relationship with the French than Hyder and his son Tippu. Yet Hyder did not adopt a European-style, infantry-dominated army. This is not to say that Hyder did not use his French connection: he relied on French help to establish his artillery and munitions foundries. He also employed French officers in his army, but they and other Europeans served in self-contained units.¹⁰⁰ With the exception of some artillery and infantry units, Europeans commanded few of the Mysore army forces. At the start of the first Anglo-Mysore War in 1767, Hyder invaded the British-controlled province of Karnatik with a combined army of 18,000 cavalry, 8,000 Maratha Pindhari (irregular light cavalry), 20,000 infantry, 750 Europeans in two companies of dragoons, and 250 artillerymen.¹⁰¹

The Mysore army reached the zenith of its power under Hyder's son Tippu Sultan. Between 1761 and 1792 the Mysore army developed into one of the most formidable in the Indian subcontinent. The rise of so powerful a force in the span of thirty years is surprising when one considers that both Hyder and Tippu were patrimonial monarchs. Despite the inbuilt weaknesses of the patrimonial bureaucratic kingdom he inherited, Tippu undertook drastic measures to centralize his state's war-making potential. He required all amildars to ascertain the exact distance between every town and village throughout his kingdom as well as all landmarks on the way, including streams, plains, hills, and wells. He reserved all resins such as wax, lac, dammar, and agalloch for the magazine at Seringapatam. Trees such as teakwood and acacia required for making the wheels of gun carriages were not to be felled for any other purpose. The amildars were also held personally responsible for requisitioning bullocks for the war effort. Every district paying 1,000 pagodas or more in taxes was required to keep four brood mares, which were

mated with government-owned stallions. As the war effort gathered pace, the number of iron foundries in each district was ordered doubled. Iron *dubas*, or shells, and steel *khutties*, or cutlasses, were to be sent to Seringapatam when needed. All trade with Madras was halted. Even personal travel to the area could result in property confiscation. Lastly, Tippu made captive all Christians in Mysore and handed their lands over to the ryots, or peasant farmers, of other religions.¹⁰²

Unlike other contemporary patrimonial Indian rulers, Tippu did not establish his army along militia lines. His army was highly centralized, and salaried officers headed most of his commands. The exceptions to this rule were his most trusted aides, Puraniya and Muhammad Reza, who were given land grants in lieu of a salary.¹⁰³ Tippu also constantly shuffled his officers from place to place to make sure no officer established a power base in the area he commanded.¹⁰⁴ Tippu recruited his infantry, or *jaish*, from both Mysore (called *zumra*) and from outside his kingdom (called *ghair zumra*).¹⁰⁵ These soldiers formed a centralized monarchical army; they were long-service volunteers, and even the troops recruited outside Mysore had to bring their families to live with them in Mysore.¹⁰⁶ Tippu's infantry were trained along European lines, mainly by the French, and used Persian words (the Mughal practice) of command.¹⁰⁷ They were organized into *cuttheris* (brigades). Each *cutcheri* was comprised of six *cushoons* (regiments), and each *cushoon* was divided into four *juqs* (companies).¹⁰⁸

The cavalry could be divided into two categories, *askar* (national or regular) and *silhedar* (mercenary or irregular). In the first case, the government owned the horses and supplied and paid the riders. In the latter case, the horses belonged to the mercenary captains or the individual mercenary soldiers. The government paid a monthly salary to these captains and paid for the loss of a horse while it was still in Mysore service.¹⁰⁹

Like his father before him, Tippu continued to use European, mainly French, mercenaries organized into a separate unit. However, during Tippu's reign in 1794 the number of mercenaries he employed constantly fell. The unit totaled twenty Europeans and two hundred Indian Christians, mainly artillerymen, or *topasses*. By 1799, prior to the fall of Tippu's capital, Seringapatam, this unit consisted of only four officers and forty-five other ranks.¹¹⁰ The lack of European officers in their military is indicative of the tactics that Hyder and Tippu favored in their wars against the British – cavalry skirmishing rather than pitched infantry battle.

The Anglo-Mysore Wars stand out among the many wars that the British fought in India. For the first time an Indian power successfully dictated the character of the conflict with the British. In this case the tactics were uniquely

Indian: the use of light cavalry. By refusing to meet the British in a set-piece battle, both Hyder and Tippu fragmented the British and destroyed their forces piecemeal. But their most favored tactic was to starve out the British by cutting their supply lines and denying their draft animals access to forage.

The immense supply trains of draft animals that accompanied every British force proved to be a major liability. In the early campaigns in Karnatik, Hyder controlled much of the region and could easily deny the British access to draft animals. One way he achieved this aim was to raze the thousands of villages from which the British could requisition or buy these animals; of the 2,290 or so villages that surrounded Madras, Hyder destroyed 2,000.¹¹¹ The British needed tens of thousands of cattle for even minor operations; during the siege of Arcot Coote needed 35,000 cattle to carry his supplies.¹¹² As the campaigns against Mysore progressed, the British found that they needed more and more draft animals. In 1781 an army of 11,000 men required 30,000 cattle, but estimates for the very next year for a force of the same size projected a requirement of 40,000 cattle.¹¹³ The company's emphasis on infantry in part required it to engage a massive train of draft animals. Infantry-dominated armies stayed in the field much longer, they moved more slowly, and they were more dependent on the rations they carried with them. Lt. Thomas Munro of the Madras army noted with disgust that the European troops were less hardy than the sepoys and required far greater logistical support to maintain them in the field.¹¹⁴ Similarly, the lack of cavalry also compelled Coote to take more cannons with him to beat off enemy cavalry; in January 1781 he had forty-four, but in April 1781 the number had risen to sixty.¹¹⁵ Each additional cannon of course meant dozens of additional draft animals. To compound the company's problems, it often received bullocks of poor quality partly as a result of the conditions that Hyder and Tippu imposed and partly because of the conduct of bullock contractors (mostly British) who were entirely dishonest and exploitive in their dealings with the company's agents. The British noted with some dismay that this want of good quality bullocks meant that while their forces could manage only 15 miles a day (under optimum conditions), Hyder could easily do 30 miles.¹¹⁶ This logistical problem meant that the British suffered constant shortages of provisions, which probably helps explain why Munro preferred to protect the supply depot at Conjeeveram rather than march to Baille's relief.

The British problems with their bullock supply trains persisted even during the campaigns under Wellesley, when the tide of the war had shifted decisively against Tippu. When Wellesley renewed his campaign during the third Anglo-Mysore War the British army with its supply train of 60,000 cattle ran into tremendous difficulties. The presence of 35,000 bullocks belonging to

the nizam's army further enhanced the problem. Even before the joint army was well under way cattle began to die in thousands. Foraging alone consumed several days and at one point imperiled the campaign itself; in the end the British advanced only 5 miles a day, and this without the slightest hindrance from the Mysore cavalry.¹¹⁷

The main problem that the British faced in the Anglo-Mysore Wars, however, was a lack of cavalry. Coote complained that even the worst of Hyder's cavalry were better than nothing, for they cut off intelligence and supplies to the Madras army.¹¹⁸ The fact that "the best Indian soldiery had sought service in the Mysore cavalry" compounded his problems.¹¹⁹ The ability of Hyder's cavalry to range at will across Karnatik hamstrung the British forces. In February 1782 Hyder seized a replenishing force of 3,000 bullocks under a Major Byrne, which resulted in Coote being inactive from February to May.¹²⁰ The British eventually redressed this imbalance with the aid of Maratha light cavalry (who had in the first place originated the very raiding tactics that the Mysorean cavalry used) and by substantially increasing their own cavalry forces. The British ability to adapt to their enemy's tactics first by using Maratha cavalry and second by giving priority to the problems of supply in the harsh terrain of the Deccan enabled them to achieve victory in the Anglo-Mysore Wars. While the Mysoreans relied upon traditional Indian cavalry tactics to combat the British, another Indian power, the Marathas, would try to beat the British at their own game: the set-piece European-style infantry battle.